

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

CHAPTER VI.

(1.) "Miss CLACK presents her compliments to Mr. Franklin Blake; and, in sending him the fifth chapter of her humble narrative, begs to say that she feels quite unequal to enlarge as she could wish on an event so awful, under the circumstances, as Lady Verinder's death. She has, therefore, attached to her own manuscript copious Extracts from precious publications in her possession, all bearing on this terrible subject. And may those Extracts (Miss Clack fervently hopes) sound as the blast of a trumpet in the ears of her respected kinsman, Mr. Franklin Blake."

(2.) "Mr. Franklin Blake presents his compliments to Miss Clack, and begs to thank her for the fifth chapter of her narrative. In returning the extracts sent with it, he will refrain from mentioning any personal objection which he may entertain to this species of literature, and will merely say that the proposed additions to the manuscript are not necessary to the fulfilment of the purpose that he has in view."

(3.) "Miss Clack begs to acknowledge the return of her Extracts. She affectionately reminds Mr. Franklin Blake that she is a Christian, and that it is, therefore, quite impossible for him to offend her. Miss C. persists in feeling the deepest interest in Mr. Blake, and pledges herself, on the first occasion when sickness may lay him low, to offer him the use of her Extracts for the second time. In the meanwhile she would be glad to know, before beginning the next and last chapter of her narrative, whether she may be permitted to make her humble contribution complete by availing herself of the light which later discoveries have thrown on the mystery of the Moonstone."

(4.) "Mr. Franklin Blake is sorry to disappoint Miss Clack. He can only repeat the instructions which he had the honour of giving her when she began her narrative. She is requested to limit herself to her own individual experience of persons and events, as recorded in her Diary. Later discoveries she will be good enough to leave to the pens of those per-

sons who can write in the capacity of actual witnesses."

(5.) "Miss Clack is extremely sorry to trouble Mr. Franklin Blake with another letter. Her Extracts have been returned, and the expression of her matured views on the subject of the Moonstone has been forbidden. Miss Clack is painfully conscious that she ought (in the worldly phrase) to feel herself put down. But, no—Miss C. has learnt Perseverance in the School of Adversity. Her object in writing is to know whether Mr. Blake (who prohibits everything else) prohibits the appearance of the present correspondence in Miss Clack's narrative? Some explanation of the position in which Mr. Blake's interference has placed her as an authoress, seems due on the ground of common justice. And Miss Clack, on her side, is most anxious that her letters should be produced to speak for themselves."

(6.) "Mr. Franklin Blake agrees to Miss Clack's proposal, on the understanding that she will kindly consider this intimation of his consent as closing the correspondence between them."

(7.) "Miss Clack feels it an act of Christian duty (before the correspondence closes) to inform Mr. Franklin Blake that his last letter—evidently intended to offend her—has not succeeded in accomplishing the object of the writer. She affectionately requests Mr. Blake to retire to the privacy of his own room, and to consider with himself whether the training which can thus elevate a poor weak woman above the reach of insult, be not worthy of greater admiration than he is now disposed to feel for it. On being favoured with an intimation to that effect, Miss C. solemnly pledges herself to send back the complete series of her Extracts to Mr. Franklin Blake."

[To this letter no answer was received. Comment is needless.

(Signed) DRUSILLA CLACK.]

CHAPTER VII.

THE foregoing correspondence will sufficiently explain why no choice is left me but to pass over Lady Verinder's death with the simple announcement of the fact which ends my fifth chapter.

Keeping myself for the future strictly within

the limits of my own personal experience, I have next to relate that a month elapsed from the time of my aunt's decease before Rachel Verinder and I met again. That meeting was the occasion of my spending a few days under the same roof with her. In the course of my visit, something happened, relating to her marriage-engagement with Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, which is important enough to require special notice in these pages. When this last of many painful family circumstances has been disclosed, my task will be completed; for I shall then have told all that I know, as an actual (and most unwilling) witness of events.

My aunt's remains were removed from London, and were buried in the little cemetery attached to the church in her own park. I was invited to the funeral with the rest of the family. But it was impossible (with my religious views) to rouse myself in a few days only from the shock which this death had caused me. I was informed, moreover, that the rector of Frizinghall was to read the service. Having myself in past times seen this clerical castaway making one of the players at Lady Verinder's whist-table, I doubt, even if I had been fit to travel, whether I should have felt justified in attending the ceremony.

Lady Verinder's death left her daughter under the care of her brother-in-law, Mr. Ablewhite the elder. He was appointed guardian by the will, until his niece married, or came of age. Under those circumstances, Mr. Godfrey informed his father, I suppose, of the new relation in which he stood towards Rachel. At any rate, in ten days from my aunt's death, the secret of the marriage engagement was no secret at all within the circle of the family, and the grand question for Mr. Ablewhite senior—another confirmed castaway!—was how to make himself and his authority most agreeable to the wealthy young lady who was going to marry his son.

Rachel gave him some trouble, at the outset, about the choice of a place in which she could be prevailed upon to reside. The house in Montagu Square was associated with the calamity of her mother's death. The house in Yorkshire was associated with the scandalous affair of the lost Moonstone. Her guardian's own residence at Frizinghall was open to neither of these objections. But Rachel's presence in it, after her recent bereavement, operated as a check on the gaieties of her cousins, the Miss Ablewhites—and she herself requested that her visit might be deferred to a more favourable opportunity. It ended in a proposal, emanating from old Mr. Ablewhite, to try a furnished house at Brighton. His wife, an invalid daughter, and Rachel were to inhabit it together, and were to expect him to join them later in the season. They would see no society but a few old friends, and they would have his son Godfrey, travelling backwards and forwards by the London train, always at their disposal.

I describe this aimless flitting about from one place of residence to another—this insatiate restlessness of body and appalling stagnation of

soul—merely with a view to arriving at results. The event which (under Providence) proved to be the means of bringing Rachel Verinder and myself together again, was no other than the hiring of the house at Brighton.

My Aunt Ablewhite is a large, silent, fair-complexioned woman, with one noteworthy point in her character. From the hour of her birth she has never been known to do anything for herself. She has gone through life, accepting everybody's help, and adopting everybody's opinions. A more hopeless person, in a spiritual point of view, I have never met with—there is absolutely, in this perplexing case, no obstructive material to work upon. Aunt Ablewhite would listen to the Grand Lama of Thibet exactly as she listens to Me, and would reflect his views quite as readily as she reflects mine. She found the furnished house at Brighton by stopping at an hotel in London, composing herself on a sofa, and sending for her son. She discovered the necessary servants by breakfasting in bed one morning (still at the hotel), and giving her maid a holiday on condition that the girl "would begin enjoying herself by fetching Miss Clack." I found her placidly fanning herself in her dressing-gown at eleven o'clock. "Drusilla, dear, I want some servants. You are so clever—please get them for me." I looked round the untidy room. The church bells were going for a week-day service; they suggested a word of affectionate remonstrance on my part. "Oh, aunt!" I said, sadly, "is *this* worthy of a Christian Englishwoman? Is the passage from time to eternity to be made in *this* manner?" My aunt answered, "I'll put on my gown, Drusilla, if you will be kind enough to help me." What was to be said, after that? I have done wonders with murderesses—I have never advanced an inch with Aunt Ablewhite. "Where is the list," I asked, "of the servants whom you require?" My aunt shook her head; she hadn't even energy enough to keep the list. "Rachel has got it, dear," she said, "in the next room." I went into the next room, and so saw Rachel again, for the first time since we had parted in Montagu Square.

She looked pitifully small and thin in her deep mourning. If I attached any serious importance to such a perishable trifle as personal appearance, I might be inclined to add that hers was one of those unfortunate complexions which always suffer when not relieved by a border of white next the skin. But what are our complexions and our looks? Hindrances and pitfalls, dear girls, which beset us on our way to higher things! Greatly to my surprise, Rachel rose when I entered the room, and came forward to meet me with outstretched hand.

"I am glad to see you," she said. "Drusilla, I have been in the habit of speaking very foolishly and very rudely to you, on former occasions. I beg your pardon. I hope you will forgive me."

My face, I suppose, betrayed the astonish-

ment I felt at this. She coloured up for a moment, and then proceeded to explain herself.

"In my poor mother's lifetime," she went on, "her friends were not always my friends, too. Now I have lost her, my heart turns for comfort to the people she liked. She liked you. Try to be friends with me, Drusilla, if you can."

To any rightly-constituted mind, the motive thus acknowledged was simply shocking. Here in Christian England was a young woman in a state of bereavement, with so little idea of where to look for true comfort, that she actually expected to find it among her mother's friends! Here was a relative of mine, awakened to a sense of her shortcomings towards others, under the influence, not of conviction and duty, but of sentiment and impulse! Most deplorable to think of—but, still, suggestive of something hopeful, to a person of my experience in plying the good work. There could be no harm, I thought, in ascertaining the extent of the change which the loss of her mother had wrought in Rachel's character. I decided, as a useful test, to probe her on the subject of her marriage engagement to Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

Having first met her advances with all possible cordiality, I sat by her on the sofa, at her own request. We discussed family affairs and future plans—always excepting that one future plan which was to end in her marriage. Try as I might to turn the conversation that way, she resolutely declined to take the hint. Any open reference to the question, on my part, would have been premature at this early stage of our reconciliation. Besides, I had discovered all I wanted to know. She was no longer the reckless, defiant creature whom I had heard and seen, on the occasion of my martyrdom in Montagu Square. This was, of itself, enough to encourage me to take her conversion in hand—beginning with a few words of earnest warning directed against the hasty formation of the marriage tie, and so getting on to higher things. Looking at her, now, with this new interest—and calling to mind the headlong suddenness with which she had met Mr. Godfrey's matrimonial views—I felt the solemn duty of interfering, with a fervour which assured me that I should achieve no common results. Rapidity of proceeding was, as I believed, of importance in this case. I went back at once to the question of the servants wanted for the furnished house.

"Where is the list, dear?"

Rachel produced it.

"Cook, kitchen-maid, housemaid, and foot-man," I read. "My dear Rachel, these servants are only wanted for a term—the term during which your guardian has taken the house. We shall have great difficulty in finding persons of character and capacity to accept a temporary engagement of that sort, if we try in London. Has the house at Brighton been found yet?"

"Yes. Godfrey has taken it; and persons in the house wanted him to hire them as servants. He thought they would hardly do for us, and came back having settled nothing."

"And you have no experience yourself in these matters, Rachel?"

"None whatever."

"And Aunt Ablewhite won't exert herself?"

"No, poor dear. Don't blame her, Drusilla. I think she is the only really happy woman I have ever met with."

"There are degrees in happiness, darling. We must have a little talk, some day, on that subject. In the mean time, I will undertake to meet the difficulty about the servants. Your aunt will write a letter to the people of the house—"

"She will sign a letter, if I write it for her, which comes to the same thing."

"Quite the same thing. I shall get the letter, and I will go to Brighton to-morrow."

"How extremely kind of you! We will join you as soon as you are ready for us. And you will stay, I hope, as my guest. Brighton is so lively; you are sure to enjoy it."

In those words the invitation was given, and the glorious prospect of interference was opened before me.

It was then the middle of the week. By Saturday afternoon the house was ready for them. In that short interval I had sifted, not the characters only, but the religious views as well, of all the disengaged servants who applied to me, and had succeeded in making a selection which my conscience approved. I also discovered, and called on, two serious friends of mine, residents in the town, to whom I knew I could confide the pious object which had brought me to Brighton. One of them—a clerical friend—kindly helped me to take sittings for our little party in the church in which he himself ministered. The other—a single lady, like myself—placed the resources of her library (composed throughout of precious publications) entirely at my disposal. I borrowed half-a-dozen works, all carefully chosen with a view to Rachel. When these had been judiciously distributed in the various rooms she would be likely to occupy, I considered that my preparations were complete. Sound doctrine in the servants who waited on her; sound doctrine in the minister who preached to her; sound doctrine in the books that lay on her table—such was the triple welcome which my zeal had prepared for the motherless girl! A heavenly composure filled my mind, on that Saturday afternoon, as I sat at the window waiting the arrival of my relatives. The giddy throng passed and repassed before my eyes. Alas! how many of them felt my exquisite sense of duty done? An awful question. Let us not pursue it.

Between six and seven the travellers arrived. To my indescribable surprise, they were escorted, not by Mr. Godfrey (as I had anticipated), but by the lawyer, Mr. Bruff.

"How do you do, Miss Clack," he said. "I mean to stay, this time."

That reference to the occasion on which I had obliged him to postpone his business to mine, when we were both visiting in Montagu Square, satisfied me that the old worldling had

come to Brighton with some object of his own in view. I had prepared quite a little Paradise for my beloved Rachel—and here was the Serpent already!

"Godfrey was very much vexed, Drusilla, not to be able to come with us," said my Aunt Ablewhite. "There was something in the way which kept him in town. Mr. Bruff volunteered to take his place, and make a holiday of it till Monday morning. By-the-by, Mr. Bruff, I'm ordered to take exercise, and I don't like it. That," added Aunt Ablewhite, pointing out of window to an invalid going by in a chair on wheels, drawn by a man, "is my idea of exercise. If it's air you want, you get it in your chair. And if it's fatigue you want, I'm sure it's fatiguing enough to look at the man."

Rachel stood silent, at a window by herself, with her eyes fixed on the sea.

"Tired, love?" I inquired.

"No. Only a little out of spirits," she answered. "I have often seen the sea, on our Yorkshire coast, with that light on it. And I was thinking, Drusilla, of the days that can never come again."

Mr. Bruff remained to dinner, and stayed through the evening. The more I saw of him, the more certain I felt that he had some private end to serve in coming to Brighton. I watched him carefully. He maintained the same appearance of ease, and talked the same godless gossip, hour after hour, until it was time to take leave. As he shook hands with Rachel, I caught his hard and cunning eye resting on her for a moment with a very peculiar interest and attention. She was plainly concerned in the object that he had in view. He said nothing out of the common to her or to any one, on leaving. He invited himself to luncheon the next day, and then he went away to his hotel.

It was impossible, the next morning, to get my Aunt Ablewhite out of her dressing-gown in time for church. Her invalid daughter (suffering from nothing, in my opinion, but incurable laziness, inherited from her mother) announced that she meant to remain in bed for the day. Rachel and I went alone together to church. A magnificent sermon was preached by my gifted friend, on the heathen indifference of the world to the sinfulness of little sins. For more than an hour his eloquence (assisted by his glorious voice) thundered through the sacred edifice. I said to Rachel, when we came out, "Has it found its way to your heart, dear?" And she answered, "No; it has only made my head ache." This might have been discouraging to some people. But, once embarked on a career of manifest usefulness, nothing discourages Me.

We found Aunt Ablewhite and Mr. Bruff at luncheon. When Rachel declined eating anything, and gave as a reason for it that she was suffering from a headache, the lawyer's cunning instantly saw, and seized, the chance that she had given him.

"There is only one remedy for a headache," said this horrible old man. "A walk, Miss Rachel, is the thing to cure you. I am entirely at your service, if you will honour me by accepting my arm."

"With the greatest pleasure. A walk is the very thing I was longing for."

"It's past two," I gently suggested. "And the afternoon service, Rachel, begins at three."

"How can you expect me to go to church again," she asked petulantly, "with such a headache as mine?"

Mr. Bruff officiously opened the door for her. In a minute more, they were both out of the house. I don't know when I have felt the solemn duty of interfering so strongly as I felt it at that moment. But what was to be done? Nothing was to be done but to interfere, at the first opportunity, later in the day.

On my return from the afternoon service, I found that they had just got back. One look at them told me that the lawyer had said what he wanted to say. I had never before seen Rachel so silent and so thoughtful. I had never before seen Mr. Bruff pay her such devoted attention, and look at her with such marked respect. He had (or pretended that he had) an engagement to dinner that day—and he took an early leave of us all; intending to go back to London by the first train the next morning.

"Are you sure of your own resolution?" he said to Rachel at the door.

"Quite sure," she answered—and so they parted.

The moment his back was turned, Rachel withdrew to her own room. She never appeared at dinner. Her maid (the person with the cap-ribbons) was sent down-stairs to announce that her headache had returned. I ran up to her, and made all sorts of sisterly offers through the door. It was locked, and she kept it locked. Plenty of obstructive material to work on, here! I felt greatly cheered and stimulated by her locking the door.

When her cup of tea went up to her the next morning, I followed it in. I sat by her bedside and said a few earnest words. She listened with languid civility. I noticed my serious friend's precious publications huddled together on a table in a corner. Had she chanced to look into them?—I asked. Yes—and they had not interested her. Would she allow me to read a few passages, of the deepest interest, which had probably escaped her eye? No; not now—she had other things to think of. She gave these answers, with her attention apparently absorbed in folding and re-folding the frilling of her nightgown. It was plainly necessary to rouse her by some reference to those worldly interests which she still had at heart.

"Do you know, love," I said, "I had an odd fancy, yesterday, about Mr. Bruff? I thought, when I saw you after your walk with him, that he had been telling you some bad news."

Her fingers dropped from the frilling of her

nightgown, and her fierce black eyes flashed at me.

"Quite the contrary!" she said. "It was news I was interested in hearing—and I am deeply indebted to Mr. Bruff for telling me of it."

"Yes?" I said, in a tone of gentle interest.

Her fingers went back to the frilling, and she turned her head sullenly away from me. I had been met in this manner, in the course of plying the good work, hundreds of times. She merely stimulated me to try again. In my dauntless zeal for her welfare, I ran the great risk, and openly alluded to her marriage engagement.

"News you were interested in hearing?" I repeated. "I suppose, my dear Rachel, that must be news of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite?"

She started up in the bed, and turned deadly pale. It was evidently on the tip of her tongue to retort on me with the unbridled insolence of former times. She checked herself—laid her head back on the pillow—considered a minute—and then answered in these remarkable words:

"I shall never marry Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite."

It was my turn to start at that.

"What can you possibly mean?" I exclaimed. "The marriage is considered by the whole family as a settled thing."

"Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite is expected here to-day," she said, doggedly. "Wait till he comes—and you will see."

"But my dear Rachel—"

She rang the bell at the head of her bed. The person with the cap-ribbons appeared.

"Penelope! my bath."

Let me give her her due. In the state of my feelings, at that moment, I do sincerely believe that she had hit on the only possible way of forcing me to leave the room. Her bath, I admit, was too much for me.

By the mere worldly mind my position towards Rachel might have been viewed as presenting difficulties of no ordinary kind. I had reckoned on leading her to higher things, by means of a little earnest exhortation on the subject of her marriage. And now, if she was to be believed, no such event as her marriage was to take place at all. But, ah my friends! a working Christian of my experience (with an evangelising prospect before her) takes broader views than these. Supposing Rachel really broke off the marriage, on which the Ablewhites, father and son, counted as a settled thing, what would be the result? It could only end, if she held firm, in an exchanging of hard words and bitter accusations on both sides. And what would be the effect on Rachel, when the stormy interview was over? A salutary moral depression would be the effect. Her pride would be exhausted, her stubbornness would be exhausted, by the resolute resistance which it was in her character to make under the circumstances. She would turn for sympathy

to the nearest person who had sympathy to offer. And I was that nearest person—brimful of comfort, charged to overflowing with seasonable and reviving words. Never had the evangelising prospect looked brighter, to my eyes, than it looked now.

She came down to breakfast, but she ate nothing, and hardly uttered a word.

After breakfast, she wandered listlessly from room to room—then suddenly roused herself, and opened the piano. The music she selected to play was of the most scandalously profane sort, associated with performances on the stage which it curdles one's blood to think of. It would have been premature to interfere with her at such a time as this. I privately ascertained the hour at which Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite was expected, and then I escaped the music by leaving the house.

Being out alone, I took the opportunity of calling upon my two resident friends. It was an indescribable luxury to find myself indulging in earnest conversation with serious persons. Infinitely encouraged and refreshed, I turned my steps back again to the house, in excellent time to await the arrival of our expected visitor. I entered the dining-room, always empty at that hour of the day—and found myself face to face with Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite!

He made no attempt to fly the place. Quite the contrary. He advanced to meet me with the utmost eagerness.

"Dear Miss Clack, I have been only waiting to see you! Chance set me free of my London engagements to-day sooner than I had expected—and I have got here, in consequence, earlier than my appointed time."

Not the slightest embarrassment encumbered his explanation, though this was his first meeting with me after the scene in Montagu Square. He was not aware, it is true, of my having been a witness of that scene. But he knew, on the other hand, that my attendances at the Mothers'-Small-Clothes, and my relations with friends attached to other charities, must have informed me of his shameless neglect of his Ladies and his Poor. And yet there he was before me, in full possession of his charming voice and his irresistible smile!

"Have you seen Rachel yet?" I asked.

He sighed gently, and took me by the hand. I should certainly have snatched my hand away, if the manner in which he gave his answer had not paralysed me with astonishment.

"I have seen Rachel," he said, with perfect tranquillity. "You are aware, dear friend, that she was engaged to me? Well, she has taken a sudden resolution to break the engagement. Reflection has convinced her that she will best consult her welfare and mine by retracting a rash promise, and leaving me free to make some happier choice elsewhere. That is the only reason she will give, and the only answer she will make to every question that I can ask of her."

"What have you done, on your side?" I inquired. "Have you submitted?"

"Yes," he said, with the most unruffled composure, "I have submitted."

His conduct, under the circumstances, was so utterly inconceivable, that I stood bewildered with my hand in his. It is a piece of rudeness to stare at anybody, and it is an act of indelicacy to stare at a gentleman. I committed both those improprieties. And I said, as if in a dream, "What does it mean?"

"Permit me to tell you," he replied. "And suppose we sit down?"

He led me to a chair. I have an indistinct remembrance that he was very affectionate. I don't think he put his arm round my waist to support me—but I am not sure. I was quite helpless, and his ways with ladies were very endearing. At any rate, we sat down. I can answer for that, if I can answer for nothing more.

OUR INNER SELVES.

THE Chinese sword-swallowers at the Paris Exhibition were extraordinary performers in their way, but at this epoch of progress they have soon been distanced. Swallowing a sabre, at present, is nothing. The fashion now is to swallow a lighted lantern and brilliantly illuminate your inner man. You then become a living and walking gas-light; that is all.

It is evident that swallowing a lantern is only one remove in advance of swallowing a sword. Now there happen to be little electric lanterns which give light without burning. They are called Gessler's tubes, and are small glass cylinders, either empty or filled with azote, hydrogen, or carbonic acid gas, through which a voltaic current is made to pass. The tubes become sufficiently luminous to allow you to read printed letters held at several inches distance from them. When this miniature lantern is introduced into a stomach, the skin is transparent enough to permit your seeing the interior of the animal. There is no need for people to live in glass houses, for they are hereby transformed into glass houses themselves. Their domestic secrets are rudely divulged; and Diogenes would be delighted to find that, instead of a mere superficial outside view of his much desiderated honest man, he can now, with the newly-invented lantern, look a person through and through.

The experiment, which may be considered exceedingly curious until something still more strange is started, is only an extended copy of what has been practised in medical art for some years past. For instance, there is the Ophthalmoscope, or Eye-inspector, of the German philosopher Helmholtz, a small instrument by means of which, the interior of the eye being lighted up, it is possible to explore successfully the deepest portions of that intricate organ. Other instruments assist in the examination of divers internal parts of the human body. Not the least remarkable of these inquisitive apparatuses is the Laryngoscope, invented by a Ger-

man physician named Czermak for the inspection of the respiratory passages and the mechanism which produces the voice.

The vocal organ in man (which Dr. Tyndall truly describes as the most perfect of reed instruments) is placed at the top of the windpipe, the head of which is adjusted for the attachment of certain elastic bands, called "vocal chords," which almost close the aperture. When the air from the lungs is forced through the slit which separates these vocal chords, they are thrown into vibration. By varying their tension, the rate of vibration is varied, and the sound changed in pitch. The sweetness and smoothness of the voice depend on the perfect closure of the slit of the glottis at regular intervals during the vibration.

The vocal chords may be illuminated and viewed in a mirror placed suitably at the back of the mouth. Dr. Tyndall once attempted to project M. Czermak's larynx upon a screen in his lecture-room, but with only partial success. The organ may, however, be viewed directly in the Laryngoscope, its motions, both in singing, speaking, and coughing, being strikingly visible. The roughness of the voice in colds is due, according to the aforesaid Helmholtz (learned in Acoustics), to mucous flocculi, which get into the slit of the glottis, and which are seen by means of the Laryngoscope. The squeaking falsetto voice with which some persons are afflicted, the same Helmholtz thinks may be produced by the drawing aside of the mucous layer which ordinarily lies under and loads the vocal chords. Their edges thus become sharper, and their weight less; while their elasticity remaining the same, they are shaken into more rapid tremors. The promptness and accuracy with which the vocal chords can change their tension, their form, and the width of the slit between them, render the voice the most perfect of musical instruments.

The order of the day, therefore, is that we should be able to see everything, without exception. If we can look an animalcule through and through by means of transmitted light; if, in the same way, we can behold the blood circulating in the tail of a tadpole or the foot of a frog, with all the minute vessels thereto pertaining, why should we not do so with larger animals, with our own proper selves? It is merely a question of degree. With a sufficient intensity of illuminating power, there is no knowing what may not become transparent. And, in fact, a distinguished hygienist, M. Foussagrives, of Montpellier, attempted to render the internal viscera of our body visible by transmitted light. They were to be exhibited to bystanders as animated and most interesting transparencies. M. Brück, a German medical man, followed up the same line of research. Finally, at the Medical Congress of 1867, M. Milliot, a French physician residing at Kiew, gave an approximate solution of the problem.

His Splanchnoscope (or instrument intended to render the viscera externally visible) has

been tried with success. It is in principle simply a Gessler's tube, or, more strictly speaking, a modification of the apparatus described in special treatises under the title of Mindeldorf's tube. At one of the meetings of the Congress, M. Milliot introduced his lantern into the stomach of a dog by means of an œsophagian probe. Through the skin, thus rendered transparent, the spectators were able to distinguish perfectly the interior of the dog's stomach in all its details. The experiment was tried a second time on the person of a cat; and it has quite recently been repeated in M. Henri de Parville's presence, the scientific collaborator of the *Constitutionnel*. M. Milliot has likewise introduced a tube more than a yard in length into a man's œsophagus; and the internal membrane of this deep-seated organ became perfectly distinguishable.

Cui bono? What is the good of all this? is a very natural question to ask. And in truth, its utility is not very apparent. The system of internal lighting up having, however, been invented, its useful application will probably come afterwards. Meanwhile, it will decide whether an absent dressmaker, while thinking where her Highland laddie has gone, has swallowed needles and pins instead of sauce piquante. It may settle the question whether Master Tommy or the cat has emptied all the pots of strawberry jam. At worst, it will be a formidable rival to sword-swallowing and Japanese feats of dexterity. Perhaps even next season's pantomime will give us a "pas brillant," danced by human glow-worms shining with all their might and main, and followed up by a new edition of the *Feast of Lanterns*, with effects which no Chinese stage-manager ever dreamt of.

SEED AND HARVEST.

AN HUNGARIAN FABLE.

EVERYWHERE the Turks were overthrown—everywhere the heralds proclaimed the victories of the Magyar arms, and peace, so long sighed for, allowed the conquering heroes to return to their homes. Among them was Janko, the valiant volunteer, who had obtained his discharge, and who came to share with his brothers the family heritage. Swiftly and soon was the matter settled, for the father's estate consisted of a single guilder,* which was to be equally divided among his three sons; and as the portion of each could not be a matter of controversy, Janko found himself in the unmolested possession of twenty kreutzers.†

It was short profit for a long journey—a result of which Janko had little dreamed—for he expected to have returned home to have passed the rest of his days in ease and peace under the roof of his ancestors. Neither for him nor for his brothers was there any better fate than to earn a livelihood by the sweat of their

brow; so they determined to separate, and to struggle each for himself, taking their different paths in the wide world that was before them.

The two elder brothers, accustomed from their youth to the labours of the field, found no difficulty in getting employment as husbandmen; but Janko, fond of wandering, and himself of an adventurous spirit—Janko, who had distinguished himself in the battle-field, could not bend down to the vassalage of the soil; he had served his country in the field of honour, he could not demean himself as a hireling to follow the plough over the agricultural field.

In truth he was so annoyed with his position that he repented ever having applied for his discharge. It was idle to mourn over what could not be mended; so he determined to float on the tide of his destiny, and courageously seek his fortune in any path that might be opened to him.

He left his little native village, wandering over field, and hill, and valley, from one place to another. He had not travelled many miles when he found himself close to a convent, into whose chapel doors a crowd of people was streaming. He recollected the words of his departed mother,

"O turn not from the living God,
If thou shouldst find him on thy road;"

so he did not hesitate, but joined the worshippers who were entering the church. A monk stood there addressing the multitude. He spoke with potent eloquence, "Do good to your neighbours, wherever and whenever you are able, and for all the good you do, God will recompense you a hundred-fold."

The words penetrated his ear and agitated his soul, he felt that the riddle of his life was solved—the law of his life laid down. He suddenly left the church that no after words might remove the impression which had been made on him.

He had scarcely turned his back upon the convent, and was thoughtfully pursuing his way, when he was met by a poor lame beggar, who humbly asked for alms. Janko put his hand into his pocket and gave the beggar half of his whole inheritance. He received in return a grateful blessing, and went on his way rejoicing.

After journeying for about an hour, he reached a village, where all the people, young and old, were busily occupied with a raffle for a horse that deeply interested the whole community. Nine-and-twenty villagers were gathered in a circle, and they earnestly requested Janko to join them and make the thirtieth, which would complete the number, and take his chance with the rest. The stake was ten kreutzers, each to be represented by a straw, and he who drew the longest straw was to become the possessor of the animal. The ten kreutzers he deposited, and made up the needful number of adventurers. It was the last half of his inheritance, but he remembered the lame beggar's blessing. The lame beggar could not

* About twenty pence.

† About seven and twenty farthings.

recompense him, but he felt assured the blessing had not been given in vain.

And what happened? When the straws were compared, Janko's was the longest; and, to the astonishment of the villagers, the stranger carried away the horse.

The impressive words of the preacher occurred to him again and again. He thought the promise of the prophecy had been fulfilled in the village. He turned over in his mind a thousand purposes for doing good. The result was that he would devote the whole of his winnings at the raffle to the first benevolent object that might present itself.

He had not proceeded far when he was met by a poor tired gipsy, dragging sadly a cart heavily laden with rusty old iron. Janko sprang from his horse, fastened it to the cart, and told the gipsy that he must consider the beast as his own property. The gipsy could hardly breathe for the thanks and the praises which he poured out on his benefactor, who treated them with unconcern; but he made a walking-stick of a branch which he gathered from a neighbouring tree, and went on his way rejoicing, while ten thousand expressions of gratitude from the gipsy followed his footsteps with prayers that he might be recompensed a thousand-fold.

And thus Janko had not only sacrificed his last penny, but the horse which he might have sold at a profit. He was menaced with hunger, thirst, and exhaustion; yet he did not allow his spirits to be depressed, but supported himself with the conviction that all would be well in the end.

Yet weariness began to overpower him, when he found himself approaching a noble castle, which was surrounded by a beautiful garden bedecked with trees and flowers. There were the finest fruit-trees of every sort which he had ever seen, all laden with the most delicious produce, which caused his mouth to water when he looked towards them. He threw himself down on a plank which lay on the grass, and languished for the arrival of the evening, in whose darkness he might, perhaps, enter the garden unobserved, and refresh himself with the inviting fruit.

The shadows of evening descended, and hills and vales were covered with darkness. Janko climbed over the fence, and mounted the branches of a noble pear-tree, so encumbered with fruit that from the moment he observed it he could not turn away his eye. He comfortably settled himself among the leaves, and ate such a quantity of pears that he found it necessary to unbutton his jacket. Having satisfied his present necessities, he bethought himself of providing for the wants of the coming day; and he filled his pockets and travelling bag with such a quantity of fruit that the bough on which he was sitting began to crack and to give way under the weight of its burden. At this very moment two charming maidens approached him. They brought easy chairs, and seated themselves immediately under the pear-tree.

They entered upon the most artless and confidential conversation. One said to the other, "No, no; if I had for a husband such a man as our charming count, I should care little for the pretensions of his cousin, the prelate." "Yes, indeed," answered the other, "the good count deserves a worthier woman. But so it is. Many times I desired to open the eyes of the dear man; but who knows how he would have taken my interference? So it was better I should be silent. I will not fan the fire that burns within me. But tell me—No; we must go. I hear the tramp of horses; the loving couple will soon be here." They rose, went away, and returned to the castle, but left the garden seats behind them. Soon a handsome cavalier appeared in the laurel alley. He approached the abandoned seats, and tied his horse to the bough of a tree. He then went off towards the castle, clapped his hands three times, and from the castle the clapping was echoed back, and brought the answer.

Janko, who had little thought of overhearing these colloquies, was all the more perplexed when he saw a tastefully dressed lady draw near, whom the equestrian embraced in the tenderest manner, and they seated themselves on the stools under the tree.

The stillness of the evening and the favouring darkness, to which the overshadowing branches of the pear-tree contributed, exercised their influence upon the outpourings of two loving souls. Sweeter and softer became the words that passed between them; and so their kisses were less and less audible; and then they slept—slept as if the downy god had waved his fan over them.

Janko, who had listened to all that passed with the greatest attention, could not understand these mysterious proceedings—that the enamoured pair should thus expose themselves to the chillness of the evening air, the dampness of the midnight dew, and the torments of the mosquitos, which in swarms infested the garden; but so it was, and they fell asleep under the pear-tree. He remained for some time, nevertheless; but being determined to disturb their quiet, and feeling the weight of his havresack more and more oppressive, he took courage, and poured out all its contents on the slumberers, so that the soft pears were showered down upon their heads like a thunder-storm. They were frightened as if the heavens had burst above them; they sprang up, and fled heels over head. The prelate left behind him his horse and his hat, and fled from the garden with all possible speed. Janko did not linger long on the pear-tree, but tumbled speedily down, seized the prelate's hat, mounted the horse, and galloped away at full speed.

The night was approaching, and as he did not like to enter an hotel with an empty purse, he continued his ride until he reached an open meadow, where he fastened his steed to a tree, and laid himself down to rest.

Though much disposed to sleep, he still found leisure, even in his dreams, to reckon the

benefits which might result to him from having possession of the prelate's horse. It occurred to him that the boldest course would be the best, and that if he the very next morning mounted the horse, and, wearing the prelate's hat, presented himself in the neighbourhood of the palace, it was most likely the prelate, or perhaps even the countess, would pay a heavy price for the redemption of their property.

And so at the sunrise he sprang into the saddle, put the hat upon his head, and rode directly towards the palace, in order to parade in the palace court. The count was taking his accustomed morning walk when Janko passed through the long tree-sided alley. He was quite astounded when he recognised the horse and the hat of his highly honoured cousin. He beckoned to the rider, and inquired how he had obtained possession of both.

The crafty fellow, who perceived that matters were proceeding quite according to his wishes, answered very meekly that the history of the manner in which he had become possessed of these his belongings would not be very pleasing to the owner of the castle, and he would rather refrain from narrating matters which concerned somewhat closely the honour of that noble person.

This two-sided answer fell like a lightning flash upon the count, and the remembrance burst upon him of some familiarities of his bride towards her cousin which had awakened suspicion in his mind. He felt disposed to admit the stranger into his confidence, and offered him a large reward if he would communicate all he knew.

Janko, who had already foreseen what was to happen, took advantage of his position, and, after some rather seeming than real hesitation, he narrated what he had witnessed in the count's garden when concealed in the pear-tree, and how he had obtained possession of the noble horse and the hat.

Janko's narrative, so singular and so staggering, was so unanswerable that the count determined, as the wisest course, to put the sinners to open shame. He presented to Janko a handful of gold, desired he would take quarters for himself and his horse at a neighbouring inn, and, after clothing himself in a brilliant uniform which the count promised to send him, that he would present himself at the table an invited guest, as a captain of cavalry, and would there avail himself of an opportunity, which would be given him, of exposing, in an allegorical form, yet so as not possibly to be misunderstood, the infamous doings of two of the company.

Janko bowed compliance, and hastened to the hotel, where he waited the further instructions of the count.

Morning dawned, and one of the count's servants presented himself to Janko, bringing with him a splendid costume, a sabre, and all the belongings of a Hussar officer. The servant bowed respectfully to the stranger, and handed to him the formal invitation of his master.

With becoming care and diligence Janko dressed himself. He wondered at his own stately appearance, and had no conception that it would have been so attractive. The dinner bell struck, and he hastened on his way to the castle.

He was very cordially received by his host, and found himself in the midst of a numerous company, and that a distinguished seat was appointed for him immediately opposite those filled by the prelate and the countess. The rich odours of the food, the noble hospitality, the most warm welcome, and, above all, the influence of the grape-juice with which his glass was instantly replenished, all helped his eloquence, and disposed him to give emphatic utterance to his thoughts. So, after he had amused the guests with histories of the many warlike adventures which he had witnessed in his military life, the count broke in, saying, "Willingly I hear repeated the tales of wars and battles, for in my youth I was familiar with the clang of arms; but now I had rather listen to some love story; and has our brave soldier none such to tell? for these have a character of their own; they interest everybody; and any love story told by a soldier must have a special charm."

The words were scarcely uttered when the wine-inspired guest broke out:

"There lives a count in Hungary,
A rich and noble man is he;
She played him false in marriage life,
That treacherous wife—that treacherous wife!
That treacherous wife, in beauty ripe,
Does she not merit many a stripe?
Why did her beauty go astray?
And why her faithful lord betray?
The noble count went hunting far,
'Neath shining moon and travelling star.
He had a cousin, trusted much,
And could he prove a traitor such?
Do pear-trees in the garden grow?
And are there shady seats below?
And, were they asked a tale to tell,
Could they not answer? Ah! too well!"

Blushes deeper and deeper, hotter and hotter, covered the cheeks of the countess. She hung down her head, and everybody noticed her embarrassment and confusion. Her sturdy neighbour's countenance was disturbed. He looked as if a hard bone had broken his teeth, and covered his face with his hand as if in agony, while Janko continued his love story:

"If pear-trees green, if shady seat,
Refuse to give an answer meet,
Was there not seated in the tree
A lynx-eyed youth? and ask what he
Could tell us of an amorous pair,
Conversing, courting, kissing there!
Find out that youth, and, on his oath,
He'll tell a pretty tale of both."

While the countess endeavoured to conceal her agonised emotions, her heart was heard to beat, and she looked up for an instant full of terror, as if she expected another thunder-storm to burst over her head, like that terrible pelting when the pears fell down from Janko's wallet.

The fat prelate sat with his forefinger on his nose, covering his mouth as before; but Janko continued:

"Their doom is this: The loving pair
Shall sit upon a donkey bare,
Their faces turned towards his tail;
With hay and straw upon their hair:
And they shall follow in the rear
Of two long-bearded goats, and then
From street to street, with laugh and stare
The crowds shall cry—All hail! All hail!"

The last words had hardly been uttered when shouts of applause rung through the hall; the two sinners uttered their feeble bravos, by which they sought to join in the general enthusiasm, when the count hastily rose—his countenance had assumed a sudden change—and with a loud and solemn voice he thus addressed the company: "I know no appeal against this sentence of condemnation. And I believe that every one of my guests think as I do, that it is most justly merited, and I will now call upon my most chaste bride and my most virtuous cousin, to say what is their verdict upon the evidence?"

The question fell like a thunderbolt upon their conscience, their breath seemed to fail them; but they assumed a sort of heroic indifference, till the countess, as if in innocent simplicity, gently said; "I think the sentence very sensible and very just! Solomon himself could not have spoken more wisely;" and the fat prelate declared he fully concurred in the opinion of the lady.

"'Tis well! 'tis well!" cried the count. "You have pronounced judgment upon yourselves, and no time shall be lost in giving it effect." The tables were turned—the guests were dismissed, the servants had all received instructions from their master. He ordered the donkey and the goats to be brought to the door; they had been kept in waiting till the order should be given for the procession to set out. The sinners stood as if smitten with the palsy, unable to utter a word; a loud bray from the long-eared, and one of the principal actors, announced the opening of the drama. No prayer, no tears availed, the prelate and the countess were seized and mounted upon the ass, and the procession marched away, preceded by a tablet on which Janko's sentence was inscribed in large letters, amidst the jeering and scoffing of an innumerable crowd.

All the arrangements had, indeed, been made by the count before the festival, which was but the beginning of the sentence. The countess was condemned to pass the remainder of her days in a convent; the prelate was banished for ever from his property, which he visited for the last time in order there to receive the ignominious punishment of flogging from the hands of a corporal, after which he was condemned to follow the drum as one of the rank and file of a marching regiment. To his guest Janko, the count presented the handsome dress he had worn at the banquet and a hundred golden

ducats as a present, and sent him on his way rejoicing.

And so, with garments and horse, and more money than he had ever before possessed, Janko gratefully took leave of the count, mounted his steed, and went onward in search of other adventures. Fortune had been shining upon him, and he whistled and sang as he rode through forests and over hills, still comforting himself with the hope that the promise of the monk would be fulfilled, and even better luck than that with which he had been favoured might fall to his share.

In the very midst of these reflections, a splendid carriage approached, drawn by four white horses, in which an ancient bishop was seated. As it was only accompanied by an old coachman and one humble attendant, Janko had courage enough to stop the vehicle, and to inquire who was within. The right reverend and his attendants were dreadfully shocked at the appearance of the armed stranger, and still more at the very peremptory way in which the question was put, and the bishop gravely answered, "I am one of God's children." "Indeed!" exclaimed Janko, "the very person I was seeking. You owe to me a thousand horses in performance of a promise made long ago, and as I may have no second opportunity of reminding you of that promise, I will just take your carriage and horses in part payment." This he said with a very stern countenance, upon which the bishop sprung out of the carriage, and with his trembling servants quietly departed, for Janko had placed his right hand on the handle of his sabre, and seemed to threaten their destruction if there was any hesitation in obeying his mandate.

So he tied his horse behind the carriage, seated himself on the box, and went on his way rejoicing. But the thought occurred to him that the bishop, notwithstanding his assumed resignation, might apply to the magistrate in the next village, and cause him to be arrested as a highway robber; so he thought it more prudent to avoid the highway, and through the alleys of the forest to place some distance between them. The forest was very extensive, and after many hours of travel Janko had not got half way through it. In fact, he was a little perplexed, for he did not know his way, and he unexpectedly found himself and his carriage in a morass, deeper and deeper embedded the more he sought to extricate them. The more the horses plunged about the less seemed the chance of their deliverance, and at last neither backwards nor forwards could they move. It seemed to Janko as if he were about to lose all his possessions. Happily, the horse which was behind the carriage was not so thoroughly whelmed in the mud, so Janko managed to get on his back, happy to have the means of getting away, leaving the carriage and its conductors in the morass.

Looking about him with great anxiety, he saw in the wood a herd of swine with their keeper. He thought it would be best to call

on the herdsman to help him in his perplexing plight; and having released himself, with the assistance of his steed, from the swamp, he rode as fast as he could towards the herdsman; but as he drew nearer and nearer the number of the swine seemed to diminish—he had been deceived by the distance—and at last he found that only three were in the keeping of the man. But he did not concern himself with this, and earnestly entreated the herdsman to lend a hand, with council and deed. The herdsman but stipulated that Janko should, in the mean time, take charge of the swine. "I know," he said, "every spot in the morass, its depth and its shallows, as if I had seen the birth and growth of each. Be not anxious, therefore; I will so safely bring out the horses and carriage that not a spot of dirt shall you see upon either." And then he left Janko, to rescue the unfortunate beasts; but the crafty fellow soon perceived that his three pigs were of far less value than the horses and the carriage, and that he might make a profitable exchange, as he really knew how to find his way through the rushes. So he mounted the box of the carriage and guided the horses safely to a dry side of the bog; but flung his hat into what he knew to be the deepest part, where there was a water eddy. He did this in order to convince the possessor of the despoiled property that he and the horses had been drowned, and that any farther pursuit would be fruitless.

And so he journeyed over hill and dale, while Janko was impatiently expecting his return. He became weary of waiting; and all the more weary when, having gone out of the wood, and looked all around towards the bog, not a sign could he see of carriage, or horse, or herdsman. He lingered for hours, he whistled, he shouted, and at last determined to abandon the pigs, to mount his horse, and to ride to the scene of his misadventure.

Miserable were his feelings, great his alarm when he perceived nothing but the swineherd's hat floating on the water. In many places he could perceive the tracks which the wheels of his carriage had left behind; he followed them as they gradually disappeared, and were wholly lost as they entered the deep water, into which his steed sank down to the saddle-girths. This was indeed a warning—all the more alarming when he saw the hat whirled about by the motion of the eddy, and he lost all heart to pursue his researches further. After many sighs and sorrowings, he began to think of the safety of himself and his steed, and to congratulate himself that he had been able to rescue so much. He turned back, made his way through the recesses of the forest, and reached a heath where there was a little hillock, surrounded by bushes and heather. Upon this hillock he saw a feeble form, which seemed busy in moving from one side to the other, and looked towards him with marked attention.

Approaching her, he found she was a dark-brown gipsy woman, who hastened towards him, weeping and wringing her hands, and im-

plored him to help her in her great need. "Dear, beautiful, golden gentleman!" she cried, while her eyes were steadily fixed upon his costly uniform, "save me from despair, or you will see me perish at your feet from suffering and sorrow. My husband sent me with a sack of jews'-harps which he had got ready for a tradesman in the city, and on which he had received the money. Tired with the sun's heat and the long journey, I went to the well in order to quench my thirst, and while I was bending over the opening my sack unfortunately fell into the water. Woe is me!" she said, weeping—"woe is me! Sure I am that if I do not bring back the sack to my husband it will cost me my life! Help me, golden gentleman! help me! Heaven will reward you a thousand-fold."

Janko, whose own misfortunes disposed him to sympathise more feelingly with the misfortunes of others, determined to lend any possible assistance to the poor supplicating woman. He remembered, too, the promise of the preacher, and was so touched with the tears and entreaties of the gipsy that he dismounted from his horse, and said he was quite ready to help her. The well did not appear very deep, so he undressed himself, gave his uniform, his money, and his steed to the keeping of the woman until he should have rescued the sack, then tied himself to the rope to which the bucket was attached, and lowered himself down into the well.

The water reached up to his throat; but the well was there as high above the water, and it may easily be believed that the ascent was far more difficult than the descent had been. Moreover, the spring was so cold that Janko's teeth began to chatter, and he feared that in a few minutes he might be frozen. Meanwhile he felt about carefully with his feet, to discover the lost bag, and several times he fancied he had reached it; but he could bring up nothing but stones and bones which, from time to time, had fallen into the well. As he could neither find the gipsy's bag, nor bear any longer the cold water, he seized the rope in order to drag himself up to the top. How terrible was his fright when, after he had mounted only a foot or two, the rope suddenly broke, and he fell plump into the icy bath. He cried, he cursed, he howled; but no answer reached his ears. It was the crafty gipsy who had cut the rope in two, had sprung upon his horse, and before Janko had even thought of ascending, had taken flight with garments and gold.

What was he to do in his misery and his abandonment? He struggled against the brick wall with his stiffened limbs, held on as well as he could with hands and feet, but fell again to the bottom. His strength failed him—he had no longer the power of utterance; teeth chattering and groaning were all that remained to him of life.

He lay many hours in this wretched plight, expecting every moment to give up the ghost; and the more forlorn was his condition as the night began to darken over him, and every ray of hope seemed extinguished in his soul.

Just at the moment when he was abandoning himself to despair, he heard the tread of a horse and the rolling of wheels near the mouth of the well. He cried out with all that remained of his nearly extinguished voice. A man answered, and promised to release him. It was a knacker, who was conveying home a dead horse, who charitably came to Janko's deliverance. He let down the rope with which the body had been fastened to the car, into the well, and dragged up the sufferer into the face of day.

Janko first thanked his deliverer with all outpourings of gratitude, and then delivered his cruel betrayer to all the curses of hell, as both his horse and his gold had fled. The curses, indeed, were so violent that they frightened the knacker himself. But when he had told the sad story of his adventure with the gipsy, the knacker was filled with sympathy and pity. He lent his cloak to Janko, and offered to take him into his service. Time was when Janko would have treated with indignation any proposal that he should be the servant of a peasant, but now he thanked heaven that he had saved his skin, and that he found even a horse-knacker to promise him his daily bread. And so, but somewhat sadly, he accepted the proffered cloak of his master, and followed with silent resignation, merely saying, "*As it was won, so it was done.*"

THE ENGLISH GENTLEMAN'S OWN PROFESSION.

(SECOND ARTICLE.)

IN a paper lately published in these pages an attempt was made to show the fallibility of the argument, which is sometimes put forward by the partisans of our army purchase system, that it preserves a certain exclusiveness in the military profession, and so helps forward the great object (so extraordinarily dear to some of our countrymen) of keeping the officers' commissions in our army in the hands of gentlemen. The extreme uncertainty of the purchase system as to its action in this respect was contended for, in the article in question, and numerous instances illustrative of that uncertainty were given. Having thus endeavoured to show that this particular object of setting apart the military profession as a service exclusively reserved for gentlemen is not invariably attained by our present regulations with regard to promotion in the army, we come next to the question whether, even supposing that it did so act, the object itself, as pursued, to the exclusion of so many others, is always, and at all hazards, so precious of attainment as a large section of English society believes it to be. That it is desirable that our army should be officered by gentlemen we frankly admit (and we think it likely that, in the main, it always will be so), but what we would ask is, briefly, whether this thing is *so* desirable that everything else is to be sacrificed to it? Whether, in a word, it is as important—or half

as important—that the officer who commands our troops should be a finished gentleman, as that he should be a good and experienced soldier? There is nothing in the world to prevent his being both—quite the contrary—but which is the most important?

How is it in other professions? If one of us gets run over in crossing Piccadilly, and the services of an eminent surgeon are required to doctor our broken limbs, is it the most perfect gentleman to be found in the medical profession for whom we inquire, or the most skilful and practised surgeon? When we have got into law difficulties, again—and who can keep out of them?—do we ransack Lincoln's Inn for a solicitor of polished manners, or do we simply ask who is the best authority on matters of this kind, and seek him out forthwith? What we want in all these different callings are able professors in their different ways. We want discreet judges, keen-sighted advocates, careful and astute solicitors, industrious and sensible clergymen, thoughtful and experienced doctors, and the like. We do not go out of our way to insist on their being refined gentlemen. Ordinarily they are so, and immensely it adds to their value; but still we do not make it of paramount importance. We are not such bad architects as to treat a most fascinating ornament as if it were a structural necessity.

But we may go much further than we have done, and still not be in the slightest danger of going too far. It is only asserting the barest truth to say that this assigning to what is a mere accessory, a position of such exaggerated importance is a dangerous as well as a mistaken proceeding. May it not be that a certain amateurish quality which is sometimes to be observed among our officers is attributable in some degree to this military deification of the "gentle?" That this amateur element exists there can be no doubt; and it is just as certain that the idea of getting rid of it is regarded with alarm by those whom it most concerns to send it to the winds. It is but a few evenings ago that the Duke of Argyll, in a memorable speech, spoke contemptuously enough of what he called "professional politicians," and in doing so used an expression, which should never be forgotten, and which told a wondrously long and significant tale. Does not this dread of what is professional, which means what is stirring, energetic, done with a purpose, exist in other natures beside that of the Duke of Argyll? Is there not among many of the "curled darlings" by whom our army is commanded something of the same dread of "professional" officers? Do not a great many of them regard the belonging to a regiment as they do the being members of a club? Is it not in this light, rather than as a profession to be studied, worked at, brought to perfection, that they get to look upon the military calling? Do they not complain of their professional avocations as a bore? Are they not for ever getting somebody else to take their

duty? Do they not take every opportunity of getting out of the uniform which is a badge of their profession? Not wanting in personal courage they are ready enough to fight when occasion offers; but they go into action, as to a fox-hunt, or a tiger-chase, and do their part always very valiantly, and often very stupidly; and this—first, because of that want of interest in war as a business, which has always characterised them—and, next because they have not studied the art of war in the barrack-room, in order that they may make it available on the field of battle.

We cannot know—we have not the means of knowing—all the mischief which comes of this non-professional element among our officers. When we read of grave military mistakes which have been attended with all sorts of ruinous results—of such blunders as the fatal march from *Mhow*, or the Hounslow expedition of more recent days—we do not know how far these and the like disasters may be attributable to this want of practical knowledge of their business by which so many of the officers who have our soldiers in charge are distinguished; we do not know—though we can partly guess—how these guardians of *our* guardians may have been occupied with the odds upon the Chester Cup, or the pigeon match at Battersea, or the prospects of the mare which Captain Jones was to run at the Water Splash steeple chases, when they might, and ought to, have been busy making arrangements for the comfort of the men under their charge, for the well-being of them during the march, and for their comfortable reception at the end of it.

Is it any consolation to us when we hear that such care and provision have been wanting, and that the most culpable neglect of the simplest and commonest precautions has led, as might be expected, to the most disastrous results—is it any consolation to us to be told that the men who were responsible for these blunders were in an eminent degree gentleman-like and well-bred? Does it console us to learn that they were men who knew how to behave in a lady's drawing-room, that they were pleasant inmates in a country house, that their manners at table were unexceptionable, that they had clean hands, and well-kept nails, and nicely fitting garments for all sorts of occasions, with knowledge when to put them on, and how? Excellent qualities all these, no doubt, but not sufficiently so to render us indifferent as to whether the individuals possessing them were, or were not, profoundly and thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of their profession, and interested above all things in the duties which belong to it.

Now let not any reader of these words go away with a false impression of what they are intended to convey, and assert that the object of what is here written is to drag down the position of the British officer, and to fill the army with a set of ill-conditioned snobs. No such thing, the reader may rest assured, is contemplated as either a desirable, or in the least

degree probable, result of the abolition of purchase in the army. What we are contending against is simply the assigning undue importance to what is, after all, but one element—and that of secondary importance—in the character of an officer. One gets tired of this perpetually heard boast: "Our officers are gentlemen; the British officer must always be a gentleman." Granted, granted, one feels inclined to say in reply, but why all this fuss about it? Are not men in other professions gentlemen? Are not barristers gentlemen? Are not clergymen, doctors, government employes? Yet these do not attain the different professional positions which they occupy by purchase. Yes, these are gentlemen—at least some of them are, and some of them are not, just as it is, and always must be, in every large collection of men, just as it is in this vaunted profession of arms, even as at present constituted.

The thing which we would plead for is that the army should, in this respect, be allowed to take its chance along with the other occupations in which men engage. Why should even an attempt be made to set apart this fighting business, and exercise a sort of protection over it for the benefit of a special class? Let a good liberal education, in the first place, and an elaborate technical education, in the second, be necessary for the military candidate, as it is for those who would enter on most other callings in which the sons of gentlemen engage. Let this profession be thrown open, as others are, to everybody who can command the means of getting such education and making such preparation. Let its high places be made objects of competition—as other high places are—to be contended for by all who possess ability, and who choose to work. Let merit—the only legitimate ground for promotion in any profession—be the ground for promotion in this. The man who does his work best in civil occupations is the man who succeeds best; let this be so in this military occupation as well.

And, after all, this attempt to put our system of promotion on a different footing would be no such new and startling proceeding as it at first sight appears. It would by no means be a leap in the dark. In our navy—far from the least distinguished of our English "institutions"—such a thing as promotion by purchase is unknown. It is unknown in the artillery and engineers; two of our finest and best organised services. In the navy, doubtless, plenty of complaints are made of the slowness of promotion and of the exercise of favouritism; but this last is, after all, only a corruption which has grown up through neglect and want of supervision, and is no integral part of our system; while the first might be amended, in a great measure, by certain new regulations in connexion with the superannuation of officers, which would be equally to the advantage of the younger branches of the profession, and of the public.

At all events, here are three important ser-

vices which get on somehow or other without having recourse to the practice of buying and selling posts of the greatest importance. Why are they thus excluded from the general rule which obtains in other branches of our war department? Is it because the control of a ship imposes upon her commanding officer a responsibility so enormous that it is felt there must be no risk of an incompetent person stepping into such a position, because he happens to be able to buy it? Is it, in the case of the other two services mentioned, because great professional skill and technical learning are required in those who are to occupy positions of trust and command? If this should be so—if these should be the reasons, or some of the reasons, why promotion by purchase is unknown in these three fine services, it would supply a stronger and more irresistible argument against the system of buying and selling commissions than any other which could be brought forward.

We have purposely throughout this paper dealt with arguments of a non-professional and untechnical kind, and such as suggest themselves to what is called the general public. We do not pretend to point out *in what way* a new scheme of promotion should be organised. This it would require a long practical and professional acquaintance with military matters to justify anyone in attempting to do. What we assume the capacity to do is to show what is the feeling on this subject of a large body of civilians. As to the actual work of preparing fresh rules for the regulating of promotion in our army, the simple natural arrangement seems to be that certain competent persons should be appointed thoroughly to investigate the subject, using every means within their reach of arriving at a true and right decision. Such inquiries, properly conducted, might be attended with the most valuable results; but it would be needful that they should be entered upon in an entirely unprejudiced and liberal spirit, nor must any suggestion which might prove useful, coming from whatever source, be neglected by those to whom the important duty might be confided.

There can hardly be a doubt, for instance, that those to whom such a task might be delegated would do well to examine with some closeness of attention what is the practice of other nations with regard to the internal discipline and organisation of their armies; extracting, as far as may be, what is good from their systems, and rejecting what is bad or unsuitable. Very valuable hints on such points are not hard to get, if we look about for them. Taking, for instance, the question of army promotion, which is just now occupying some degree of public attention, might we not do worse than spend some time in studying the rules by which this is regulated in the different European armies? Such rules are by no means inaccessible; and although no special set of regulations would in all points serve as a guide to us—because each nation has its individuality,

and no one among them more unmistakably than our own—yet might we get from some of them certain valuable suggestions which might be of use in our present uncertainty.

Let us—to take an instance—glance for a moment at some of the rules by which promotion is regulated in a service—that of Austria—which still holds, in spite of recent achievements by Prussian needle guns, a high position among European armies. It may be that in English eyes a special value may attach to Austrian arrangements in this kind, because the officers belonging to that service have among us a better reputation for the possession of a gentlemanlike and gallant bearing than is enjoyed by some other of their continental brethren. Let us see, then, how these matters are managed in Austria, and how they contrive to get on without the purchase system, which we have got to regard as so indispensable to the ordering of a well-regulated army.

The earlier regulations contained in the Austrian code relate, of course, entirely to that first preliminary step which enables the youth who desires to embrace a military career to enter the army in the capacity of what they call a cadet.

"No one," say the Austrian rules, "can be nominated for a commission unless he shall have attained the age of eighteen years, and shall have passed the prescribed examination in a satisfactory manner. Certificates of good character and proofs of having received a liberal education will be required from each candidate.

"Cadetships to be in the gift of colonels of regiments. Cadets will take rank, in the regiments to which they are appointed, according to their position in the examination reports."

Here, it will be observed at starting, is an indication of that accordance of a superior position to merit which we all desire should be at the root of advancement in the army, and which it is good to see coming into force at so early a stage in the soldier's career as this. There is no distinct mention in this place of the social class to which these candidates for cadetships are expected to belong, except that furnished by the clause which ordains that they shall be able to give proofs of having received a liberal education. This regulation, of course, limits the class of applicants not a little.

A great readiness to reward exceptional merit appears throughout this code, as witness the next rule:

"Non-commissioned officers and cadets who may have particularly distinguished themselves in the field, may be nominated to sub-lieutenancies without passing the prescribed examination, provided they have received a good education, and their general conduct has been without exception good."

"Out of every four vacancies among the sub-lieutenants in any regiment, the two first are to be filled up from the cadets according to seniority: the third is to be reserved for pupils from the Imperial Schools: the fourth is to be

at the disposal of the colonel, who may confer it on a cadet without regard to seniority."

Here is more provision for those who have distinguished themselves in a special manner:

"Cadets and officers of all ranks may, for highly distinguished service before the enemy, be selected for promotion. The general commanding an army in the field has a right to make such appointments up to the rank of captain of the first-class. Promotion by selection to higher grades requires the confirmation of the Emperor."

"In time of peace officers cannot attain the rank of captain until they have completed at least four years' service as subalterns."

"Every captain before receiving promotion to the rank of field-officer, must pass an examination, the result of which is to be communicated by the examiners to the commander-in-chief. If a captain shall (during the illness or absence of his superior) have discharged the duties of commanding officer of a battalion for more than four weeks, the examiners are to confine themselves to a decision upon the manner in which such duty has been discharged."

The next two clauses seem very important, providing as they do for a very large class of persons, who are more distinguished by their integrity and good conduct than by the possession of such special abilities as would entitle them to rise to any high position of trust and command. For such as these the different posts which come under the general description of "Local Employ," seem to be admirably well suited.

"Majors, captains, &c., who do not possess the requisite abilities which should entitle them to promotion, but who nevertheless have *claims for long service*, may receive promotion to a higher grade in local employment, receiving the pension of the latter grade, after completing at least two years' service in it."

"Local Employ" includes, commandantships of local troops; employments under the war department garrison staff; remount establishment (sic); hospital, store, and barrack staff appointments. The number of majors and captains thus nominated to lieutenant-colonelcies and majorities in Local Employ, is fixed as follows:—Here comes a list of the number of such appointments in each branch of the service, which it is unnecessary to give in detail. This matter disposed of, the document before us proceeds, "officers employed in the Imperial Schools of Instruction retain their right to promotion in times of peace and war alike. Non-commissioned officers employed in those establishments are eligible for sub-lieutenancies after six years' good service, provided they can pass the ordinary examination test for cadetships."

The next few regulations relate chiefly to certain restrictions connected with the ages of the officers belonging to the different grades, which seem in the main excellent.

"In the frontier troops and in the artillery,"

two branches of the service which are probably considered to be of more importance, and to require in the officers who superintend them more of vigour and energy than the others. "In the frontier troops and in the artillery," continues the document from which we quote, "captains of fifty years of age, lieutenant-colonels of fifty-six, and colonels of fifty-eight, are to be considered ineligible for promotion, except in local employ. The maximum age of officers of each grade is fixed as follows: For the active army; subalterns, fifty-four; captains and field-officers, sixty; general officers and field-marshal-lieutenant, sixty-two. For local employ: subalterns, sixty-two; captains, and field-officers, sixty-four; and generals, sixty-six years. Exceptions may be made in certain cases to these rules. A commission, presided over by a general officer, is to report annually on the cases of officers whom it is thus proposed to except. No superannuation limit is laid down in the case of field-marshal."

These age restrictions seem to be valuable in more ways than one, serving not only to secure for the different official posts to which they relate the services of officers in the full vigour of manhood, but also tending, it may be supposed, to counteract that slowness of promotion for which the purchase system is by so many believed to be the only remedy. It is said that in the Austrian army these rules with regard to age have given the most general satisfaction.

There remain one or two more of these laws for the regulation of promotion in the Austrian service, which seem worthy of a passing notice. Among them may be counted the following:

"Officers may be passed over for promotion," have others promoted over their heads, "on the following grounds: First, having been made prisoners of war, according to the result of the court of enquiry on their return." By this is meant probably according to the degree of blame which attaches to them for having been so made prisoners. "Second, their conduct having been made the subject of military or judicial investigation, not wholly exculpatory. Third, not possessing the requisite qualifications for a higher grade."

This last disqualification for promotion would doubtless prove to be surrounded by many difficulties in the working out. Yet one cannot quite see how any system of promotion with which merit should have anything to do could be carried on without some such regulation. Men enter professions every day for which they are not naturally qualified, having drifted into such callings rather than chosen them, and then sticking to their choice simply because they do not see their way to anything else. In no career which men follow under the sun do persons who are misplaced in this way advance to the highest places, and it is certainly not desirable that they should do so in the army. The superseding them, however, must always be a painful proceeding; but this necessary severity may be in some sort modified in the Austrian service by the existence of those situations

which come under the general denomination of local employ, to some of which these wrong men in the wrong place may doubtless be safely appointed.

One quotation more on the subject of distinguished service promotion :

"Promotion for distinguished service is retained as an imperial prerogative. It is to be solicited only in the case of officers of high rank who have attained the prescribed limits of age, or who are about to retire from the service with permission to retain their rank. They must be among the ten seniors of their grade, and have claims on the score of distinguished merit."

These selections from the Austrian regulations with regard to promotion in the army are given for what they are worth. The system here developed is found to answer in a great European army, and, from this point of view, seems worthy of a certain amount of respect and consideration. Some of its conditions would no doubt prove unsuitable to our English institutions, such as that contained in the second clause of this document, and in which provision is made for the promotion, under certain circumstances, of non-commissioned officers to the rank of sub-lieutenant. To such a rule as this we English people should be very much disposed to demur, and, probably, with reason. The rank and file of our army is composed of a much lower class of men than are to be found in the other European services. This is partly owing, no doubt, to our dispensing, in this country, with the conscription, which obtains for the continental armies the pick of the young men throughout the different countries where it is in force, while we are left to take what we can get in the way of recruits—"what we can get" being too often the very refuse and off-scouring of society. At any rate, be the reason what it may, one thing seems certain, that the granting of commissions to non-commissioned officers who have served in the ranks always proves in this country to be more or less of a failure. The man thus elevated is not at ease in the society of his brother-officers, who have had advantages of education and bringing up so widely different from his own. Nor are these last any more at ease with him. Indeed, as far as an outsider can judge from hearsay, not much attempt is made at intimate association in these cases, a sort of mutual feeling existing on both sides that any such attempt would not be likely to lead to satisfactory results.

That greater prizes than are at present within the reach of what we call the "common soldier" should be possible of attainment by him is, on the other hand, a consummation much to be desired, and it is for those who are practically acquainted with such matters to say whether certain military functions of an honourable and lucrative nature might not be set apart as rewards for distinguished services performed by private soldiers and non-commissioned officers. But these offices, supposing such to exist, or to be

hereafter brought into existence, should still be for men who do not hold commissions, and should not by any means elevate the individual who should be successful in getting any such post above the social condition of a non-commissioned officer.

With the exception of this particular rule relating to promotion from the ranks, the Austrian document before us seems to contain much that it might be useful for us to consider. It is one specimen, among many others. No doubt similar statements relating to this subject, as published by other nations, might be consulted with equal advantage. Unquestionably we are wonderfully unlike other countries, in nearly all respects; and in consequence of this dissimilarity, it is most difficult for us to adopt any of their practices. Still we do occasionally, in connexion with non-military matters, take hints from without; and there seems to be no particular reason why we should not do so with regard to any such army arrangements as we are constrained to admit are more successfully organised in other nations than in our own.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

THE name of this American poet is but little known in the British islands. Very few British readers have read his poems, and fewer still possess them. On his mother's side, Mr. Halleck descended from John Eliot, "the Apostle to the Indians." Born in Connecticut, in 1795, he was brought up amidst the prejudices of his locality and the passions of his neighbours; but in him, as in all the more cultivated men and women of his nation, there is discernible a yearning of the mind, a hankering of the heart, towards the islands of his forefathers.

We are not parted from the friends we love,
Because between us rolls the broad salt sea.

Mr. Halleck when eighteen years of age, in 1813, went from Connecticut to New York, working in mercantile and banking-houses until he became the confidential assistant of John Jacob Astor, the wealthy speculator in land. When Mr. Astor died, in 1849, he returned to Connecticut, having become a trustee of the Astor Library. The poems of Mr. Halleck must be viewed as verses written in the leisure, or recreative hours, snatched from business. Versification can be learned only by imitation, and a versifier does not become a poet until he can compose new melodies, and embody in them fresh themes. Most of Mr. Halleck's poems are poetical studies and exercises, by a lover and imitator of the poetry of his day; and this character belongs to all his serious pieces and some of his gayer effusions. His translations show that he never attained a thorough mastery of his art. His *Marco Bozzaris* is, indeed, a fine poetical exercise, very highly and carefully finished, and admirably suited for declamation; but neither in the music nor in the matter is there any originality. Halleck's genius was

humorous. In his fragment on Connecticut, there is a picture which could only have been drawn by a humourously observant mind :

"Tis a rough land of earth, and stone, and tree,
Where breathes no castled lord or cabined slave ;
Where thoughts, and tongues, and hands are bold
and free,
And friends will find a welcome, foes a grave ;
And where none kneel, save when to heaven they
pray,
Nor even then, unless in their own way.

Theirs is a pure republic, wild yet strong,
A "fierce democracie" where all are true,
To what themselves have voted—right or wrong—
And to their laws denominated blue ;

A justice of the peace for the time being,
They bow to, but may turn him out next year ;
They reverence their priest, but disagreeing
In price or creed, dismiss him without fear ;
They have a natural talent for foreseeing
And knowing all things ; and should Park appear
From his long tour in Africa, to show
The Niger's source ; they'd meet him with—we
know.

They love their land because it is their own,
And scorn to give aught other reason why ;
Would shake hands with a king upon his throne,
And think it kindness to his majesty ;
A stubborn race fearing and flattering none,
Such are they nurtured, such they live and die ;
All but a few apostates, who are meddling
With merchandise, pounds, shillings, pence, and
peddling ;

Or wandering through the southern countries, teach-
ing
The A B C from Webster's spelling-book :
Gallant and godly, making love and preaching,
And gaining, by what they call "hook and
crook"

And what the moralists call over-reaching,
A decent living. The Virginians look
Upon them with as favourable eyes
As Gabriel on the devil in Paradise.

But these are but their outcasts. View them near
At home, where all their worth and pride is
placed ;

And there their hospitable fires burn clear,
And there their lowliest farm-house is graced
With manly hearts, in piety sincere,
Faithful in love, in honour stern and chaste,
In friendship warm and true, in danger brave,
Beloved in life, and sainted in the grave.

There can be little doubt of this being
poetry—indebted, however, unquestionably for
the form in which it appears to the irresis-
tible example set by "Beppo," and "Don
Juan." No inhabitant of Great Britain more-
over can think there is anything foreign
about the shrewd good folks described. They
are just ourselves with more of their own
and our own way. In his poem on Alnwick
Castle, Mr. Halleck describes one of the castles,
none of which are to be seen in his own country,
with which the traditions of his ancestors as
of ours are associated—for in this our English
brotherhood, there have occurred strange ups

and downs, and there have been discovered
wonderful relationships. I myself knew the
last of the Plantagenets as a grave-digger ; and
I had a friend, the owner of a castle and seven
thousand pounds a year, whose heir (unknown
to him), was found (ignorant of his heirship) in
the backwoods of the Far West. The Connecti-
cut poet hails in Alnwick Castle the

Home of the Percy's highborn race,
Home of their beautiful and brave ;
Alike their birth and burial place,
Their cradle and their grave.

"The lion above the castle-gate, the feudal
banners above the tower, the warriors in stone,
the gentle green hill, the quiet stream, are the
features of a spot where Hotspur and his bride
Katherine, were seated a thousand years ago." He
notices next the ruins of the abbey, with
their ivy and roses, the crusader's tomb, the
relics of border story, and the lore of centuries
since :

the startled bird
First in her twilight slumbers heard
The Norman's curfew bell.

I wandered through the lofty halls
Trod by the Percys of old fame,
And traced upon the chapel walls
Each high heroic name
From him who once his standard set
Where now, o'er mosque and minaret,
Glitter the sultan's crescent moons ;
To him who, when a younger son,
Fought for King George at Lexington
A major of dragoons.

This last half stanza—it has dashed
From my warm lip the sparkling cup.
The light that o'er my eyeball flashed,
The power that bore my spirit up
Above this bank-note world, is gone ;
And Alnwick's but a market-town,
And this, alas ! its market-day,
And beasts and borderers throng the way ;
Oxen and bleating lambs in lots,
Northumbrian boors and plaided Scots,
Men in the coal and cattle line ;
From Teviots bard and hero land,
From Royal Berwick's beach of sand,
From Wooller, Morpeth, Hexham, and
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

These are not the romantic times
So beautiful in Spenser's rhymes,
So dazzling to the dreaming boy ;
Ours are the days of fact, not fable,
Of knights, but not of the Round Table,
Of Bailie Jarvie, not Rob Roy :
'Tis what our "President" Monroe
Has called "the era of good feeling ;"
The Highlander, the bitterest foe
To modern laws, has felt their blow,
Consented to be taxed, and vote,
And put on pantaloons and coat,
And leave off cattle-stealing.

Lord Stafford mines for coal and salt,
The Duke of Norfolk deals in malt,

The Douglas in red herrings;
And noble name and cultured land,
Palace and park, and vassal band,
Are powerless to the notes of hand
Of Rothschild or the Barings.

You'll ask if yet the Percy lives
In the armed pomp of feudal state?
The present representatives
Of Hotspur and his "gentle Kate"
Are some half-dozen serving men
In the drab coat of William Penn;
A chambermaid, whose lip and eye,
And cheek and brown hair bright and curling,
Spoke nature's aristocracy;
And one, half groom, half seneschal,
Who bowed me through court, bower, and hall,
From donjon keep to turret wall,
For ten and sixpence sterling.

The society of the author of these lines the reader will readily believe was much sought, for his amusing anecdotes and humorous conversation. In the memoirs of Washington Irving some glimpses are given of the society in which Irving and Halleck met and mingled.

THE LATE MISS HOLLINGFORD.

CHAPTER XII.

THE next morning I set off for a solitary walk to the farm. I was going to ask of Mrs. Hollingford formal permission for my visit to London, and to say good-bye to her and the girls. I cried sadly to myself walking over the happy moor and through the wood. I felt unutterably lonely and woebegone. I was going to part from my only friends, and the separation was at hand. I knew that Mrs. Hollingford would blame me, and I felt it hardly worth my while to defend myself. I had quarrelled with John, and broken our engagement. I was going to London with gayer friends. Everything was against me; all the wrong seemed mine. I knew that the dear old lady would say little, only look sad and disappointed, thinking in her heart that things were turning out as she had prophesied; would give me full permission to go where I pleased, and do what I pleased; would kiss and bless me; and then I should have the wide world before me.

It was a radiant May day. A saint has said that "peace is the tranquillity of order;" and such a peace brooded over the happy farm as I crossed its sunny meadows, heard the bleating of its lambs, the lowing of its kine, met its labourers coming and going. An idler was piping somewhere in the fields, the rooks were cawing, the leaves on the boughs just winked in the breeze, the hall door lay open as usual. I did not see a soul about, and I walked in without summoning any one. I opened the parlour door; the place smelt of May and myrtle, and there were fresh roses in the jars, but there was no one there. No one in the kitchen, dairy, still-room; the maids were abroad this glorious noon. I went up-stairs, looking for a face in vain till I came to our

school-room. There was Jane alone, sitting at the table over some books, her head between her hands, her hair thrust back from her face, looking older and paler and thinner since I had seen her; a stern, sad-looking young student, with her back to the sun that burned upon the lattice.

Her face turned scarlet when she saw me, and then became paler than before. She gave me her hand coldly, as if she would rather have held it by her side. Her mother was out, she said; had gone to visit at a poor house where there was death and trouble, and would not be home till evening. Mopsie had taken the dogs for a ramble. Then we both sat down and were silent, and Jane's eyes wandered over everything in the room, but would not meet mine.

"I am going to London, Jane," I said, "and I came to bid you good-bye."

"I know," she said. "John told me." And she blushed again fiercely. "I am very glad. I have thought for a long time that London was the place that would suit you best. I knew you would soon tire of the farm."

"I have not tired of the farm," I said, "but the farm has tired of me."

She glanced up amazed, then smiled bitterly, and turned aside her head without speaking, as if such utter nonsense could not be thought worthy of an answer.

"However," I added, "I did not come here to talk about that—"

"No," she interrupted, hastily, "it is not worth your while to make any pretence to us. We do not expect to have friends; we never thought of it till you came. In time we shall get used to the curse our father left upon us."

"Jane, Jane," I said, angrily, "how can you be so wicked?"

"How can I help being wicked?" she asked. "I heard that it was prophesied of us that we should all turn out badly, because ill conduct runs in the blood."

"You do not deserve to have such a mother," I said.

"Oh! my mother!" she said, in an altered tone. "But she has given all her sweetness to Mopsie, and—to John," she added, with an effort, a tear starting in her eye. "But I am my father's daughter. She would cure me too, if she knew of my badness; but she is a saint, and thinks no evil. I work hard at my books, and she calls me a good industrious girl. I will never pour out my bitterness on her. But if my father were here I would let him know what he has done."

The hopeless hardness of her young voice smote me with pain, but I could think of nothing to say to her. I felt that she thought I had been false to John, and that her sympathy for him had stirred all the latent bitterness of her nature.

"And how is the young lady at the hall?" she asked, suddenly.

"Do you mean Miss Leonard?" I said.

"Oh, yes—Miss Leonard," said Jane, dropping her eyes on the floor with a strange look.

"Very well," I answered, thinking of the jubilee that was going on at the hall.

"There is more wickedness in the world than mine," said Jane, still frowning at the carpet. "She is false, and you are false—every one is false. I only know of two grand souls in the world—my mother and John. But the wicked ones will prosper, see if they don't—those who are gay and charming, at least. Bad ones go down like a stone, and lie at the bottom."

At this moment an eager treble voice was heard on the stairs, and the next Mopsis and I were crying, with our heads together, on the lobby.

"Oh, Margery, Margery!" sobbed the little one—"dear, darling, *sweet* Margery! why are you going away? You promised you would always stay. Oh, oh, Margery!"

An hour passed before I could tear myself away from the child. Jane prepared luncheon, which was not eaten; but she did not attempt to share in our sorrow and caresses. When I turned from the door Mopsis was prostrate, weeping on the mat; and Jane was standing upright in the doorway, straight, stern, and pale. So I went sorrowing back to the hall. And I had not seen Mrs. Hollingford.

Had I seen her that day, had her errand of mercy not taken her away from her home and kept her away while I stayed, the whole current of my life and of the lives of others might have been changed. She would then have had no reason to come and visit me the next morning at the hall, as she did.

I was busy packing in my own room, enlivening my work by humming gay airs, just to make believe to myself that I was very merry at the prospect of my visit to London. The door opened quickly, and Rachel came in, walking on tiptoe, with her hand to her lips in trepidation. Her face was as pale as snow, and large tears stood in her eyes.

"My mother, my mother!" she said, like one talking in her sleep. "I have seen my mother."

"What do you mean, Rachel?" I cried, quite panic-stricken; for I thought that her mother was dead, and she must have seen a ghost.

"My mother—Mrs. Hollingford; you know her; you are her true daughter; I am nobody—a liar, an outcast. Oh, oh, Margery! she did not know me. Am I changed? I was a child then. And she—oh, God! how sunken her eyes are, and dim!—she did not know me. 'And this is Miss Leonard!' she said; and I hung my false face, and curtsied from the distance, and ran away. Oh, God! my mother! Margery, Margery!"

The strange confused words passed like light into my brain. First the room grew dark, and then so bewilderingly bright, that I could see nothing. But presently Rachel's white face, with its piteous look, came glimmering towards me. I stretched out both my hands to her, but she melted from my touch; what colour of life

remained in her face faded away from it, and she fell in a swoon at my feet.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MESSENGER came to my door to tell me that Mrs. Hollingford was waiting to see me. Rachel, restored to her senses, was lying upon my bed with her face hidden on my hands.

"Rachel," I said, "I must go to her; but before I go tell me, assure me, that what you have said is true, that you are truly the daughter of Mrs. Hollingford."

"I am truly her daughter, Mary Hollingford," said Rachel (for I cannot but still call her Rachel); "I am John's sister. That is the secret I wanted to tell you one night, when you were jealous. But you would not listen. I have more, much more, to tell you; but go now. One thing I beg you to promise me—that you will tell her you have changed your mind about going to London. Let the Tyrrells go, and stay you with me—oh, stay with me! I want you so badly; and, now that I have once spoken, I will trust you with everything—all my wickedness and weakness, all my troubles and difficulties."

She spoke entreatingly, and her tears fell over my hands as she kissed them.

"I will stay," I said; and the sun began to dance on the walls, it seemed. "I will help you all I can; and, oh, how glad I shall be to let the Tyrrells go without me!"

And then I went down-stairs.

I found my dear old lady looking very sad and worn and anxious. I threw myself into her arms and sobbed on her neck.

"What is this, my love?" she said. "Is it a mistake, after all? And whose is the fault? Is it yours, or is it John's?"

"Mine—mine," I cried. "And I am not going to London. But you must not tell John this, because he might think—"

"Think what?" she said, smiling.

"Oh, I don't know; but you must only tell him that I have deferred my visit because Miss Leonard," I choked a little over the word, "has pressed me to remain here longer."

She went away smiling and satisfied, and I went wondering back to my room to hear Rachel's story.

I found her standing, as pale as a ghost, at my window, which commanded a view of the approach to the house. Looking over her shoulder, I saw Mrs. Hollingford's black robe disappearing among the trees.

"Now, Rachel," I said—"now for your story. I have done what you bid me. I am going to stay with you. Trust me with everything. I am full of anxiety and wonder."

But at that moment a messenger came to the door seeking Miss Leonard. Mr. Noble was waiting for her to walk with him.

Rachel flushed at the summons.

"Do not go; send him word that you are engaged—what can it matter?" I said, eagerly.

"No, no," said Rachel, confusedly. "You

must excuse me now, Margery. I must go. Have patience with me, dear," she added, wistfully. "I will come to your room to-night."

And she went away sadly.

She came to me that night surely. She asked me to put out the lights, and crouching on a low seat by the fire, she told me her story.

"Do not ask me to look in your face till I have done," she said, "but let me hold your hand, and whenever you are too much disgusted and sickened with me to hear me any longer draw away your hand, that I may know."

Poor Rachel! that was what she said in beginning. I will tell you her history as nearly as possible in the way that she related it, but I cannot now recollect, and it were useless to repeat one half the bitter words of self-condemnation which she used.

When quite a little girl (she said) I was sent to a school in Paris. Oh, why did my mother send me so early from her side? It was a worldly school—worldly to the last degree. I learned chiefly to think that in proportion as my father was honoured and wealthy, my friends gay and extravagant, just so were my chances of happiness in life. I had handsome clothes and rich presents, and I was a great favourite.

There was a lady, a friend of my father's, who lived in Paris, and who had liberty to take me for holidays to her house as often as she pleased. She made a pet of me, and I spent at least half my time in her carriage or her salon. She had charming toilettes prepared for me, which I was enchanted to wear. Thus I was early introduced to the gay world of Paris, and learned its lessons of folly and vanity by heart. I can remember myself dressed like a fantastic doll, flitting from one room to another, listening to the conversation of the ladies and admiring their costumes. Every summer I came home for a time, but I found home dull after Paris, and I was rather in awe of my mother's grave face and quiet ways. She always parted with me against her will—I knew that—but it was my father's wish that I should have a Parisian education.

I was just seventeen, on the point of leaving school, bewitched by vanity and arrogance and the delights of the world, when the dreadful news came—you know—about my father, his ruin and disgrace. The effect on me was like nothing you could enter into or conceive. I think it deprived me even of reason, such reason as I had. I had nothing in me—nothing had ever been put in me—to enable me to endure such a horrible reverse.

My mother had written to that friend, the lady I have mentioned, begging her to break the news to me. She, however, was on the point of leaving Paris for her country château, and simply wrote to madame, the mistress of my school, transferring the unpleasant task to her. She sent her love to me, and assured me she was very sorry, desolée, that she could not delay to pay me a visit. I have never seen her since.

And so the whole school knew of my fall and disgrace as soon as I learned it myself. The first thing I did when I understood the full extent of my humiliation was to seize my hat and cloak, and rush out of the house with the intention of never coming back, never being seen again by any one who had ever known me. But after walking Paris for several hours, and getting two or three rough frights through being alone and unprotected, I was overcome with fear and fatigue, and was obliged to return by evening, hungry, weary, and sullen, to the school.

I took it for granted that all the world would now be my enemy, and, determined not to wait to be shuffled off by my friends, I assumed at once a hauteur and defiance which estranged me from every one. My mother, my poor mother, wrote to me, begging me to be patient until she should find it convenient to bring me home. Patient! Oh dear, I did not know the meaning of the word! No, I would not go home; I would change my name, and never willingly see again the face of one who knew me.

Every day I searched the papers, and soon saw an advertisement which I thought might suit me. An English lady in Paris required an English companion, "young, cheerful, and well-educated." Without losing a moment I went straight to the hotel where the lady lived, saw her, pleased her; she was good, kind Mrs. Hill.

I gave her an assumed name, the first that entered my head, and referred her to madame at my pension. When I returned home, I said:

"Madame, I have two hundred francs here in my desk; they shall be yours if you will not deceive a lady who is coming here to assure herself that I am respectable and well-educated, and that I am Miss Leonard, an orphan, and of an honourable family."

Madame coloured and hesitated; she was surprised at my audacity, but I knew that she had bills coming due just then, and that she was extravagant. We, her pupils, had talked over these things. She hesitated, but in the end agreed to oblige her dear child who had been to her so good and so profitable a pupil. Perhaps she thought I acted with the consent of my mother, that it was not her affair, and that Providence had sent her my little offering to help her to pay her just debts.

Mrs. Hill came the next day; a word satisfied her, and she only stayed about three minutes. She was preparing to leave Paris for Rome, and had many affairs to attend to in the mean time. She urged me to come to her without delay, and in a few hours I was established under her roof.

I was then quite unaware that I had omitted to mention Mrs. Hill's name or address to madame, and that madame had forgotten, or had not been sufficiently interested in the matter to ask it. As I said before, I think it is likely that madame believed I acted with the

consent of my friends, and that she had no further concern in the matter. Indeed, indeed, I had then no idea of deserting my mother altogether. I was hurried along by impulse, and I intended, when the hurry of action should be over, to write and tell her of all I had done. I little thought that when I quitted my school that day, without leaving behind me the name and address of my new protector, I cut away the only clue by which it might be possible my mother should find me in the future. I did not know that I should afterwards deliberately turn my back upon her, and hide myself from her.

Arthur Noble dined with us on that very first evening of my acquaintance with the Hills. You know that I have been long engaged to Arthur, and I will speak to you freely about him. He has often told me since that he liked me from the first moment he saw me. I felt it even that evening; but I could not believe in it. But the possibility of it dazzled and bewildered me, so powerful was the fascination he possessed for me.

When I went to bed that night I felt my heart strangely softened and opened. I thought a great deal about my mother and my home, of which I knew so little, and for the first time feared that I had done very wrong, and resolved to write to my mother surely on the morrow. I felt myself to be an impostor and a liar, and I trembled, thinking of her just anger at my falsehood and cowardice. I felt that when writing to her I must make up my mind to confess to Mrs. Hill that I had deceived her respecting my name and condition, and bribed my schoolmistress to deceive her also. I knew that my mother would not tolerate the deceit; but the thought of the confession was insufferable to me.

The next day, while we sat together, Mrs. Hill talked to me about Arthur Noble. He was a great pet of hers, and at present she was particularly interested in his circumstances. He had a cousin in England who was a great heiress, and whom his father wanted him to marry. Arthur disliked the idea extremely; and as the lady was supposed to be very well inclined towards him, he was anxious to avoid danger by prolonging his tour abroad. He had arranged to go on to Rome with them, the Hills; but only yesterday his father, Sir Arthur Noble, had met him in Paris, urging him to give up the project, and return at once to England. He, Sir Arthur, had lost heavily by the failure and bad conduct of a London banker—a gentleman who had been his personal friend. My heart beat thickly as I heard her say this; but I did not dare to ask the name of that banker. In the midst of my dismay Arthur Noble came in to assure Mrs. Hill that he still intended to be of the party to Rome. His father's ill-humour would subside by-and-by. He was only a little upset by the shocking conduct of his friend Mr. Hollingford. Then Mrs. Hill asked questions on the subject, and I sat by stitching at my embroidery while Arthur described my father's disgrace.

My letter to my mother was not written that day. In the afternoon we went out, and in the excitement of shopping I tried to forget everything—who I was, what I was, what I had done, and what I ought to do. In the evening Arthur Noble appeared again, and with him came his father. Sir Arthur and Mr. Hill conversed apart, but I could hear the fiery old baronet giving vent to his anger against my father. Arthur devoted himself to Mrs. Hill and me. I was bewildered and distracted at the position in which my rash conduct had placed me, and I was very silent. Arthur exerted himself to amuse me, and under the spell of his attractions my remorse was smothered.

I have not spoken to you yet of the wonderful affection which Mrs. Hill lavished on me. You have seen it lately, but it was the same from the first. She made me her daughter at once, as far as her conduct to me could do so, though I had been some months her companion before she declared her intention of formally adopting me.

Day followed day, and Arthur was always by my side. A new feverish dream of happiness encompassed me, and it was only in the quiet of wakeful nights that I thought of my mother and sisters and brother, and longed to hear some news of my sorrowful home. Every night my wrappings with my selfish nature grew weaker and weaker. I could not risk exposure and banishment from Arthur's presence. I left Paris for home without writing to my mother.

You will hate me, Margery. I hate myself. I gave myself up to the pleasure of the hour, and in selfish happiness drowned the reproaches of my conscience, till I told myself at last that it was too late to undo what I had done. Time flew, and I became engaged to Arthur, secretly at first, for he dreaded his father's displeasure. We went from place to place, staying a few months here and a few months there. We spent a year at Rome, and Arthur was with us nearly all the time. When we had been some time engaged, Arthur confided in his father, and asked his consent to our marriage. Sir Arthur was hopelessly enraged at the idea, and, as we could not marry without his consent, we have been obliged to be patient ever since. Arthur has always kept telling me that he knew his father would relent in time. And he was right. The time has come. Sir Arthur has at last reluctantly withdrawn his opposition, and we may be married on any day in the future which I may choose to name.

Stay, stay! she went on, as I was about to interrupt her eagerly with a question, let me tell you everything before I stop. I used to dream that when I was married to Arthur, when no power on earth could separate us, I would confess who I was, seek out my mother, and ask her forgiveness. Remorse never left me, and I had bitterness in the midst of my happiness. Arthur suspected that I had trouble which I would not share with him, yet I could not bring myself to con-

fess, so great was my fear of being parted from him.

Some time before that evening when I first met you in London, I went to see some friends of Arthur's. During that time, several months, I had not seen Mr. or Mrs. Hill; but in the meanwhile Mrs. Hill had written to me of their intention of coming here to Hillsbro', saying that Mr. Hill's new agent had written such cheerful accounts of the estate, that he felt a longing to be on the spot, giving encouragement to the improvements which were going forward. She did not mention the name of the new agent, and it was only on that evening when I first met you, when with shame and bitter self-reproach I heard you defend my poor mother so valiantly, it was only then I knew that the agent was my brother, and that I was actually coming to live within a few miles of my deserted home.

My first thought was that now, indeed, the time for making all the crooked things straight had come; but, oh Margery, you cannot imagine—one like you never could imagine anything so wickedly weak as I am. The old bugbear of our family disgrace, the old terror of Arthur's throwing me off in disgust, rose up again with all their former strength, and I came here torn by conflicting feelings. You saw my meeting with John. The next day when he came here to dine, I found an opportunity of telling him my story. He was very severe with me at first, though not so much so as I deserved; but he forgave me at last, on condition that I would make up my mind to be honest with every one, let the consequences be what they might. I promised this; but again and again my courage has failed. He has been so good, so kind, so patient with me. He told me of my mother, of the children, of you, and, oh, how he chafed at the thought of what you would feel about the affair. Every time we met he reproached me with my cowardice and delay, and I made fresh promises; but Arthur's letters invariably broke down my courage and destroyed my resolutions. Again and again John has asked me to allow him to tell you who I was, but I would not suffer it. I could see no reason for humbling myself sooner to you than to any one else, until one day it flashed on me that you were jealous of me. Then, after a hard struggle, I came to you to tell my story. You repulsed me, you even assured me that the Tyrrells were your best friends. I was glad of the excuse to spare myself and my secret. And so it has gone on. Latterly John has scarcely spoken, or hardly looked at me. I think he has given me up. I know not what he means to do, but I think he means to let me have my own way. I think I should have been silent to the last, but that I saw my mother to-day. I saw her. I saw her!

"And now you will tell her all—everything," I said, squeezing her hands, while the tears were raining down my face.

"Margery, Margery!" cried Rachel, "how

can I give up Arthur? Here he has come to me after these years of waiting, and presses me to name a day for our marriage, and I am to meet him with a story like this! He would despise me."

"I think," said I, "that if he be a generous man he will forgive you. After loving you so long, he will not give you up so easily. And your mother," I added. "Think of all she has suffered. Is she worth no sacrifice?"

"She never knew me," said Rachel, gloomily; "and she will be happier never to know me. She could not have smiled as she did to-day if she had not forgotten that I ever existed."

"That is a selfish delusion," I said. "If your mother never knew you, it is plain, at least, that you have never known her. Such a woman could not forget her child. You cannot think that she has not sought for you, and mourned for you, all these years?"

"Oh no," said Rachel, with another burst of sorrow, "John has told me. They searched, they advertised, they suffered agony, and feared every terrible thing, till at last they were obliged to soothe one another by trying to think me, by speaking of me as, dead. Little Mopsie thinks I am dead. So it has been, and so it must be."

"So it must not be," I persisted, and so I fought with her all night. The dawn was in the room before she got up to leave me, pale, and worn, and weary, but promising that she would make yet one more great struggle with herself to break the chain of deceit with which one rash falsehood had so strongly bound her.

CHAPTER XIV.

I HAD the happiness of seeing my friends the Tyrrells depart for London without me. I think they were both, brother and sister, somewhat tired of my inconsistencies and vagaries, and I dare say they felt as little sorrow at parting as I did.

The long hot days of summer followed one another in a slow wandering fashion. No news reached us from the farm. I had vaguely hoped that John would come and speak to me again; but we neither saw him nor heard from him. Mr. Hill was from home during these days, and there was no necessity for John to present himself amongst us, though there might have been many an opportunity if he had cared to seek one. All the light short nights I lay awake, wondering what was going to become of my life.

And Rachel? Was she mindful of the promise she had given me on that night? Alas! no, my dears. She was absorbed in her Arthur. They went here and there together; they were ever side by side, dreaming away the time; seeming lost to every one else in their happiness. I should have thought that Rachel had forgotten all her confession to me, all that had passed between us on the subject, but for a piteous look which she gave me now and again when no one was by.

At last an early day was fixed for the marri-

age, and a wonderful trousseau came down from London for Rachel. The pretty things were hardly looked at by her and packed away out of sight. Then I saw that two warring spirits were striving within Rachel. The colour left her face, she grew thin, she started and trembled at a sudden word or noise. Sometimes in the middle of the summer nights, just as the earliest birds were beginning to stir, she would come into my room and throw herself weeping across my bed. But I dared not speak to her then. She would not tolerate a word. And so she took her way.

One morning Arthur went off to explore some place alone; a most unusual event. I was in my own room when Rachel came in to me, suddenly and quickly, and very pale.

"Come," she said, "come now, I have got courage to go this moment, but I must not delay. Come, come!"

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"You know well," she said, impatiently; "to my mother. See, I am taking nothing valuable with me."

She had on a calico morning dress, and plain straw hat. She had taken the ear-rings out of her ears, the rings off her fingers.

I was ready in an instant, and we went off through the wood together. I did not attempt to ask her what she meant to do; she was not in a mood for answering questions. She took my hand as we walked, and held it tightly, and we went along as children do when they are going through the green wood in quest of May flowers, only our steps were more fearful, and our faces paler than children's are wont to be. We went on very silently and bravely, till we were about half way, deep in the wood, when a cheerful shout came across our ears, and a swaying and crackling of bushes; and Arthur Noble's handsome genial face and stalwart figure confronted us on the path.

"Maids a Maying!" he said. "A pretty picture, on my word. Whether be you bound, fair ladies, and will you accept the services of a true knight errant?"

Rachel's hand had turned cold in mine. "We are going to the farm to visit Mrs. Hollingford," I said stoutly, "and as you are not acquainted with the lady you had better go home alone, and amuse Mrs. Hill till we come back."

"Ah! but I do not like that arrangement at all," said Arthur. "Why should the lady at the farm not receive me? Has any one been giving me a bad character? Speak, Rachel, may I not go with you?"

"I cannot go any further," said Rachel; "I am not well." And indeed she looked ill.

"Rest a little," I said, pitilessly, "and by-and-by you will be able to go on."

But Arthur, all alarmed, looked at me with surprise and reproach, drew Rachel's hand within his own, and began walking slowly towards the hall. I followed, with no company but my reflections, which were odd enough; and so ended this adventure.

And now what I think the most startling occurrence of my story has got to be related, and when it is told all will be pretty nearly finished.

It was arranged that the wedding should be very private. Sir Arthur, although he had reluctantly withdrawn his opposition, had refused to be present at the marriage, therefore, no other guests were invited. The eve of the day arrived, and I had spent the forenoon in decorating the little church with white flowers. Early in the morning Rachel and Arthur, with Mr. and Mrs. Hill and myself, were to proceed thither, and an hour later the husband and wife were to depart on their life's adventure together.

I remember the kind of evening it was. There was a great flush in the sky, and a great glow on the earth, that made the garden paths hot to the tread, and crisped up the leaves of the full-blown roses. There was a rare blending of heaven and earth in lovely alluring distances, and a luscious odour of sweet ripe things athirst for rain. The drawing-room windows were thrown up as high as they would go, and it was cooler within than without. Up-stairs the bride's trunks were packed, and the white robe was spread out in state, waiting its moment. We were all in the drawing-room, Mr. and Mrs. Hill variously unoccupied, Rachel and Arthur sitting together before a window. In another window I was down on my knees leaning my elbows on the open sash, and gazing out on the idealized world of the hour in a kind of restful reverie, which held the fears and pains and unsatisfied hopes of my heart in a sweet thrall, even as the deep-coloured glory that was abroad fused into common beauty all the rough seams and barren places of the unequal land. Suddenly out of the drowsy luxury of stillness there came a quick crushing sound, flying feet on the gravel, and a dark slim figure dashed through the light. Whose was the figure? I could not be sure till I sprang with a shock to my feet, and went to the window where Rachel and Arthur were sitting. Then there was no mistake about it. Here was Jane Hollingford, suddenly arrived.

She stood strangely at the window, with one foot on the low sash, so that she could look searchingly into the room. She had on no bonnet nor hat, and the dust of the road was in her hair; it was also white, up to the knees, on her black dress. She was quite breathless, and looked sick and faint with over-running. But there was Jane's wild spirit shining as strong as ever out of her black eyes. She drew breath a moment and looked eagerly into the room with that half-blinded searching look out of the dazzling light into the shade. Then her eyes fell on Rachel, and she spoke, and said a few words which electrified us all.

"Mary Hollingford," she said; "come home. Your father is dying, and he wants to see you."

Mr. and Mrs. Hill came to the window to see

what it was. We were all silent from surprise for about a minute. Then Rachel rose trembling.

"Sit still my love," said Arthur; "it is only a mad gipsy girl." And Jane was not unlike a gipsy.

"Come, come!" cried Jane, stamping her foot with impatience, not vouchsafing even a look at Arthur. "Come, or you will be too late; there is not a moment to lose."

I think Mrs. Hill's voice piped shrill exclamations at my ear, but I remember nothing that she said. Mr. Hill, who knew Jane's appearance, was speechless. Arthur had risen, and stood by Rachel, looking amazedly from her to Jane, and from Jane to her. Rachel turned on him a grievous look which I have never forgotten, and pushed him from her with both her hands back into the room. Then she glanced at me with a mute entreaty, and I stepped with her out of the window, and we went across the lawn, and through the trees, and away along all the old tracks to the farm. Following Jane, who, knowing we were behind her, flew like the wind, without once looking back. We soon lost her, for we often paused to pant and lean against one another for a moment's respite in this strange remarkable race. We did not speak, but I looked at Rachel, and she was like a poor lily soiled and crushed by the storm, with her white dress trailing through the dust, and her satin shoes torn on her feet. But that was nothing. We reached the farm-house. There was some one moving to meet white dishevelled, quivering Rachel. There was a cry, smothered at once in the awful hush of the place, and Rachel fell, clasping her mother's knees. I left them alone. What sobbings and whisperings, confession and forgiveness followed, God and his angels heard.

I went blindly into the hall, knowing nothing of what I did. I met John coming to me. I had no words. I stretched out my hands to him. He took them, took me in his arms, and that was our reconciliation.

That night we were all present at a death-bed. It was only bit by bit that I learned the story of how the dying man came to be there. The poor erring father, reduced to want, and smitten by disease, had crept back in the disguise of a beggar to ask the charity of his deserted wife and children, and to breathe his last sigh among loving forgiving hearts. It was Jane, stern Jane, who had denounced him so cruelly, nursed such bitter resentment against him; it was Jane, who had happened, of a summer evening in her mother's absence, to open the door to his knock, had taken him into her arms and into her heart, had nursed him, caressed him, watched and prayed with him.

So that was the end of poor Jane's hardness of heart. It was all washed away in tears at her father's death-bed. The last trace of it vanished at sight of Rachel's remorse.

My dear Mrs. Hollingford, my sweet old mother! These two shocks well nigh caused her death; but when she had nobly weathered the storm she found a daughter whom she had mourned as lost, living and breathing and loving in her arms, and her brave heart accepted much comfort.

And what about those three kind souls whom we left in such sudden consternation by the open window in the drawing-room at the hall? Why, of course, they came to inquire into the mystery. I was the one who had to tell them Rachel's story, as kindly and delicately as I might. You will be glad, my children, to know that they made very little of their darling's fault. Mr. Hill was somewhat grave over the matter, but Mrs. Hill would not allow a word of blame to be uttered against her pet. She urged, she invented a hundred excuses; good, kind soul. As for Arthur Noble, he readily discerned love for himself as the cause of her unwilling desertion of others. His nature was large enough to appreciate the worth of my John and his mother. As he had been willing, he said, to wed Rachel friendless, so was he now more willing to wed Rachel with friends whom he could love. So the beloved culprit was tried and acquitted, and after many days had passed, and the poor father had been laid in the earth, a chastened Rachel was coaxed back to her lover's side, and, I have no doubt, told him her own story in her own way.

But old Mr. Hill was, to my mind, the most sensible of them all, who said to his wife: "They may say what they please, sweetheart! but, to my thinking, the lad, John, is by far the flower of the Hollingford flock!" And the fine old gentleman proved his good-will after years had passed that were then to come. When called upon to follow his wife, who died before him, he bequeathed the Hillsbro' estate to my husband.

Rachel (he always called her Rachel) and Arthur went to live in Paris. Jane married a great doctor of learning, and found her home in London; and Mopsie made a sweet little wife for a country squire, and stayed among the roses and milk-pans.

For John and me, our home was the farm, till fortune promoted us to the hall. Thither the dear mother accompanied us, and there she died in my arms. There, also, at last, my husband. And now, my darlings, your father, my son, is the owner of Hillsbro', and the hall is your own happy home.

And the old woman has returned to the farm.

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